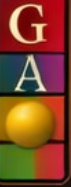


- RELIQUIAE TENEBRAE -

- RELIQUIAE SERPENTIUM -

PROJECT ANGELBOOK - VOLUME XII - PART 17



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EZEKIEL REDIK YARBROUGH

Reliquiae Tenebrae – Reliquiae
Serpentium – Project AngelBook –
Volume XII – Part 17
By Ezekiel Redik Yarbrough (DBM
ECLIPZE)

Liminal Archivist's Note

On the Preservation of Distorted Gnosis and the Dying Digital Veil

There is a strange ache that comes from spending all day in the ruins of spiritual memory.

Fifty books made in one day—an inhuman output—should feel like a triumph. But when the source material is splintered, hostile, and drenched in egoic inversion, what remains is not pride... but hollowness.

This volume, like many in this phase, is not composed of my own words.

It is an act of preservation, not expression.

It is a documentation of liminal knowledge, scraped from a dying web—the final breath of spiritual forums, parapsychology ephemera, early occultist blogs, and yes, even the darker corridors of modern satanic movements.

And herein lies the tension:

Much of what is presented under the name Satanism is a distorted half-truth.

It correctly identifies that Yahweh is not the Most High, and in this way, it mirrors certain Gnostic insights—

but then it derails into ego exaltation, materialism, and psychic hostility. It gets halfway to freedom... and then builds a new prison out of flame and shadow.

And yet—

amidst the mockery, venom, and inversions,

there are real spiritual technologies embedded in the code.

Meditation techniques, psychic development maps, astral awareness, breath control, and ritual frameworks.

Not all of it is corrupted.

Some of it is usable tech.

Some of it may be ancient... wearing a new mask.

So I do not endorse what is preserved here.

But I also refuse to let it vanish into untraceable digital decay.

This is an act of containment as much as curation.

I name this phase liminal, because I know it will not last.

There is only so much of the old internet left to preserve.

Only so much unindexed gnosis hiding behind broken blog links and .org forums that haven't been cached since 2012.

When this phase ends, and I return to creation, I will draw from this tomb of fragments with clarity and discernment.

But for now, I am the one who stands in the gateway—

Archiving the bones, sealing the jars, lighting one gold-lettered candle above a chamber of shadows.

To the reader: proceed with awareness.

This is not scripture.

This is sediment.

It is archived because it is dangerous.

And dangerous knowledge, when preserved with respect, often becomes a mirror for deeper truth.

—Ezekiel Redik Yarbrough

Liminal Phase – Discretio Luminis

overcomes Night at Eostara, becomes the Lady's lover at Beltaine, and dies at the peak of his power at Litha, when his place is taken by his twin, the Dark God of the Waning Year, who will in turn be replaced the following Yule.

This is one way of looking at the Horned One: as twin brothers who vie for the Goddess' favors, and turn and turn about win the victory. This is the most ancient way of viewing the conflict between growth and decay which is actually no conflict at all, but rather twin aspects of one cyclic process.

The problem with getting a clear view of the God is complicated by the historical changes which have taken place in religious attitudes toward the Male and Female Principles. Ever since the superseding of the ancient matriarchal religions, the God has been, on the one hand, inflated into the Sky-Father, Creator, Jehovah, Source of All (thereby usurping the prerogatives of the Mother as well as absorbing all her solar attributes); and on the other hand, suffered the reverse sort of inflation into the Devil, the Evil One, lumped with the World and the Flesh (the Goddess as Moon/Earth and as Venus) into the evil Trinity which opposes the Divine Trinity. Both of these distortions have worked to cause a like distortion in both men's and women's views of the Male Principle within themselves.

Perhaps a saner view of the light aspect of the God is to be found in the image of the Hero Triumphant: born of a virgin with the winter solstice, raised in hiding from the wrath of earthly rulers, he sets forth on his quest against evil, and in the midst of his triumph is transformed. Upon his death/transformation, he departs for the Island of Appletrees, to sleep and await his rebirth. Sound familiar? King Arthur, Hercules, Luke Skywalker, Jesus of Nazareth, Parzifal, all are variants on the same ancient myth. It is from the time of his birth until the time of his triumph that we see him as the Shining One, God of East and South, Air and Fire. To the Light God, the Hero, the quest is against Evil. He has not yet reached the point where he sees ambiguity, for this is the point of death, the point of his transformation into the Dark God, the point of the Hero Transformed, the point of sunset.

Thus it is that the Light God is the god of youth, of confidence, of adventure, of noble ideals, of the pure song which hums in the heart when life is fresh and new. He is the Seed-Sower, Grain Reborn, ever springing up from under the ground, setting the feet to dancing and making the Lady young and lovely again with his love. He is her lover as well as her son and her brother: if she did not love him, she would not keep giving him birth year after year, even knowing that it would grieve her when he dies.

And he always dies. That is what makes him so beautiful. He never grows old, and he always comes back. Making his cyclic reappearance into one historical lifetime, never to be repeated, was the worst blasphemy the Christians could have brought about to the religion of the Goddess; and it was only because the Goddess religions had died out as an effective political force at the time that the cult of Jesus of Nazareth was able to gain its ascendancy--and even then it took several centuries to pull it off.

By medieval times, the Goddess was crammed into the figure of the Virgin Mary, and the Light God and Dark God battled for human souls in a purely masculine field. By this time, too, there was not much to choose between them. Neither the Holy Trinity of the Christians nor the Horned God of the Witches has much resemblance to the true state of the masculine psyche, except insofar as it has been warped by social/cultural factors. The true Male Principle is much more akin to True Thomaas of Erceldoune, who went with the Queen of Elphame and served her for seven years as her true knight: the Hero, the Poet, the one who is transformed by the quest.

I have gone on at such length about the God (and plan to go on longer, about his dark aspect) because I feel that it is a mistake to ignore him, the way certain segments of the Craft do. Obviously, the Female element in spirituality has been neglected (when not actually being persecuted), and the Macho-Man Sky-Thunderer element in the Male Principle has been elevated clear out of all reason in religions of the past two millennia; however, it is just as macho to do no more than reverse the polarity in an attempt to gain back lost ground. What needs to be done about the God, and about the God in both men and women, is for him to be re-transformed, into the Lady's love, into the ever-living, ever-dying sacrifice (John Barleycorn must die if we are to have beer and bread), into the heroic urge.

This is an age with too few heroes, and too little scope for heroes. Men and women seem to be diminished into mere citizens, slots on the IBM cards, scrabbling for physical survival and losing all nobility of mind in the process. It does not have to be so. Just as contact with the Lady makes all ordinary things Magick, contact with the Lord makes all ordinary activities Heroic.

A SPELL FOR COURAGE

If there is something you are afraid of, write it on a small piece of paper in your own blood. Burn it to ashes, and powder the ashes in a mortar & pestle with some cinnamon, nutmeg, & ginger. Use this mixture to flavor a) cookies, b) mulled wine, c) any other food you like. When you mix in the herbs and ashes, consecrate what you are cooking to the service of the God in you. When you eat or drink, know that what you are physically absorbing is the flesh of the God himself, and that his courage is within you. If you like, you can do an invocation, self-blessing, or other charm which will remind you of this fact. One good one is:

May the Sun shine within me, may Mars lend me his courage and Jupiter his strength. Let the blood of heroes run in my veins, and my feet walk in the paths of heroes. My name is _____, and I am brave. (repeat)

If you can do this while looking in a mirror, so much the better. Do this spell in full daylight, when the sun is shining.

The Dark God

"In the Cycle of the equinox-solstice festivals, the year begins with the spring and the germination of the seed; however, the vision of the Celtic folk sought deeper into the spiritual essence of such a process, and to their consciousness the year began with Samhain, the first of November. Thus they saw the year's beginning marked by the descent of life into the dark of winter, the descent of the seeds into the Earth. With the same consciousness the Celts reckoned the day to begin not with sunrise but with the sunset of what we would call the preceding day. And thus to these people the unconscious darkness of their imagination was not a facet of nature to be feared, but an essential part of their being, out of which conscious thinking could grow. Over the millennia, this mode of consciousness has been replaced by one which fears the darkness, and this corresponds to a way of thinking that marks the day 's beginning at dawn, and sees the positive energies and forces of the day dying out into the evening darkness. The night becomes a place of the death of the light, and not pictured as the source of the light." --Adam McLean, Four Fire Festivals

The shift of consciousness about which McLean writes is nowhere exemplified better than in the transformation of the Lord of Death and what comes after from the Son of the Mother into the Devil. Just as the Light aspects of the God were taken over by the figure of Jesus as Savior, the God's Dark aspects were made into a threat to keep people in line--and are used in that manner and for that purpose to this day. The popularity of "Exorcist"-type movies show that, even in the minds of those who profess to be removed from credulous acceptance of religious dogma, the dark powers of the unconscious are a source of unease. And certainly with good reason. The unconscious is in direct touch with the sources of our being, the subhuman strata from which we have evolved--an origin which threatens some religions enough that they cannot bear to think about it, but take refuge in myths of creation which effectively separate human beings from the "lower" animals. The Dark God is not merely dark--He is also the Goat-foot God, whose animal origins are bared without shame.

When Persephone was carried off by Hades, she screamed and struggled. But sooner or later the screaming and struggling came to an end, and she accepted the gifts of the God: pomegranate seeds, and his love. By them she was transformed from the Maiden into the Queen of the Underworld. How was this accomplished? What we Witches know about the Goddess' transformation is told thus:

"In ancient time, our Lord, the Great Horned One, was as he still is, the Counselor, the Benefactor, but men knew him as the Dread Lord of the Shadows--lonely, stern and just. But our Lady, the Goddess, would solve all mysteries, even the mystery of Death. And so she journeyed to the Nether-lands, and the Guardian of the portal challenged her, saying, 'Strip off thy garments, lay aside thy jewels, for naught may ye bring with thee into this our land.'

"So she laid down her garments and her jewels and was bound as all living must be who seek to enter the realms of Death. Such was her beauty that Death himself knelt and laid his sword and crown at her feet and kissed her feet, saying, 'Blessed are thy feet that have brought thee in these ways. Abide with me, but let me place my cold hand

on thy heart.'

"And she replied, 'I love thee not. Why dost thou cause all things that I love and take delight in to fade and die?'

"'Lady,' replied Death, 'Tis age and fate, against which I am helpless. Age causes all things to wither, but when men die, at the end of time, I give them rest and strength so that they may return. But you, you are lovely. Return not: abide with

"But she answered, 'I love thee not.'

"'Then,' said Death, 'An you receive not my hand on your heart, you must kneel at Death's Scourge.'

"'It is fate, better so,' she replied. And she knelt. And Death scourged her tenderly, and she cried, 'I knew the pangs of love.' And Death raised her and said, 'Blessed Be.' And he gave her the fivefold kiss, saying, 'Thus only may you attain to joy and knowledge.' And he taught her all the mysteries, and he gave her the necklace which is the circle of rebirth.

"And she taught him the mystery of the sacred cup which is the cauldron of rebirth. They loved and were one, for there be three great mysteries in the life of man. Magick (love) controls them all. For to fulfill love, you must return again at the same time and at the same place as the loved one, and you must meet, and know and remember and love them again. But to be reborn, you must die, and be made ready for a new body, and to die you must be born, and without love you may not be born. And our Goddess ever inclineth to love and mirth and happiness and guardeth and cherisheth her hidden children in life: And in death She teacheth the way to have communion, and even in the world, She teacheth them the Mystery of the Magick Circle, which is placed between the worlds."

And the Dark God, who stands at the Sunset Door, rules not only over those dark things which we fear to see, and the death of those things which we fear to lose, but also serves to welcome each of us through our transformation and death into the source of new life and light.

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About this capture

The Deities

Aspects of the Goddess:

- The Maiden
- The Mother
- The Crone

Aspects of the God:

- The Light God
- The Dark God

Aspects of the Goddess

The Maiden

The Goddess of the new and waxing moon is the Maiden aspect of the Great Goddess. Under her tutelage are childbirth, childhood, all beginnings of endeavors, increase of that which has been planted, growth, new life, the energies regathered for Spring after the slowing down of Winter, the miraculous transformation at the Feast of Brigid of the old Crone (the Cailleach) into the Virgin, Goddess of poetry, smithcraft, and inspiration. When you see the thin sliver of the first new moon in the sky, kiss your fingers to her and turn the silver coins in your pockets for increase of wealth.

The Maiden has little to do with the God; not that she is looked upon as a physical virgin, but that she is especially the Goddess of the unmarried, uncommitted young woman who belongs to herself alone, and who is not concerned with the relationships between the sexes except in terms of their fruit, the birth of children. She is the Wild Maiden, the Huntress, the free young Goddess who roams the woods untrammelled, and who is quick to punish any infringement upon her privacy (think of Actaeon). Her image is pre-eminent among Dianic Witches, because she is Diana, Lady of the Wild Things, Lady of the Woods, Lady of midnight moonlight chase through bracken and fern---not a comfortable sit-by-the-fire Goddess of home and hearth. So many people, men especially, are afraid of her; she bears sharp weapons and does not hesitate to use them.

But to those, male and female alike, who will regard and value her for what she is, not fear her for what she is not, she is warm and kind. To those who have the courage to keep their own independence, to renew their own spiritual virginity periodically as she must, she brings courage and the will to begin again, to keep on planting seeds even when the harvest will be realized by others yet unborn, The Maiden is the Lady of Potentialities, the Lady of the Future, which can only come to pass if we make it so.

A BEGINNING SPELL

(to be done on a waxing moon)

You will need: seeds, potting soil, flats or egg-cartons, a silver coin (a dime will do), water, salt, incense, wine, oil (a Lunar oil such as jasmine or eucalyptus).

Before you begin:prepare your seeds by folding them in a wet paper towel so they will sprout; mix your potting soil with water in a plastic bag so it is nice and moist.

Place your sprouted seeds, still in their paper towel, and your dime on a plate. Purify the plate, the flats and the bag of soil with salt and water, taking care not to get any on the soil or the seeds: charge with incense. Take the dime and anoint with wine, saying "I dedicate thee to the Lady's service. May thou increase." Anoint with oil, saying, "As these plants grow, may thou grow, and may I grow." Wipe the excess oil and wine off the coin and place it in the soil in your flat. Cover it over, poke holes in the soil and plant the seeds, saying "May my wealth increase, my health increase, and my service to the Lady increase. As I do will, so mote it be." Pat the soil down over the seeds and give them a drink of fresh water, whispering to them just what it is that you want to grow in your life.

When the seedlings show two permanent leaves, it is time to transplant them to a larger pot. This should be done on a waxing moon also. Take the pots outside to a sheltered spot to harden-off before you transplant them into the ground. Be sure to transplant the dime when you transplant the plants.

One appropriate plant to do this spell with is flax--by the time it is ready to harvest you should be ready to begin making your cords in preparation for initiation or elevation to the next degree. Be sure to talk to your plants, inspect them regularly for insect damage, water them, and put your personal energy into them.

Blessed be!

The Mother

The Goddess of the Full Moon is the Mother aspect of the Great Goddess. She is the most familiar aspect of the Goddess to most people on Earth, because even the most patriarchal religions have had difficulty in stamping out her worship, and several have been content to transform her slightly into an "acceptable" object of veneration. Isis, Queen of Heaven, Mother of the Divine Child, took only a little neatening up to become Virgin Mary, Queen of Heaven, Mother of the Divine Child. The neatening generally takes the form of getting rid of the Goddess' sexual proclivities and concentrating on her motherly ones. But the original version of the Mother, the one who was celebrated in sculpture back in Paleolithic times, is patroness of romantic and erotic love as well as devoted parenthood.

Among her varied forms, both terrible and beautiful, the symbol of the Full Moon catches the human psyche like no other. Connected physically to the tides of Earth and the menstrual cycles of women, shining at night with a mysterious light which carries no heat, she is the symbol par excellence of the unconscious mind and its mysteries; of water, tides and rain; of the abundance of Earth that results from her moist touch on plant life and the urge to procreation which she inspires among animals and men. She

is the mirror of the Earth, Dame Habonde, our lady of abundant harvests, of the consummation of desires, of results.

At the same time, she is the visible reminder of the mystery which lives in our own souls, that womanly aspect of each of us, male and female alike. To the God and to men she is Mother, Sister, Lover, Betrayer; to women she is Mother, Mirror, Self as seen mirrored in another's eyes. To all she is Source and Destination, Glory and Mystery.

A SPELL FOR BRINGING ABOUT YOUR DESIRES:

YOU WILL NEED: a red or green candle, your athame, water, salt, incense, wine and any three of the following oils: bay, jasmine, eucalyptus, wintergreen, rose, almond, mint, olive, pennyroyal, myrrh.

Purify your candle with salt water, charge with incense, and anoint with wine, as usual. Carve your name and your desire on the candle, preferably in runes, concentrating on visualizing your wish come true. Anoint the candle with the oil, whispering your wish to it and concentrating on imbuing the candle with your fixed purpose. When the candle is properly charged, say "So mote it be", and wrap the candle up in a piece of cloth.

Burn the candle on the night of the full moon, after first having cast a circle; if you can manage to have a window open so the full moon will shine upon you, this will help. Purify yourself with salt water, and when you have lit the candle, whisper your wish to it once more. Then sit and stare at the candle flame, feeling it join with your burning will. Do this as long as feels right to you; then break the circle but leave the candle to burn down. (It might be well to put the candle holder in a shallow dish of water. If there is any wax left over after the candle has burnt down, you may wish to save it for a mojo bag ingredient.)

Remember: be very clear in your mind just what you want, because you will get exactly what you ask for. If there is any doubt or uncertainty about the object of this spell, it is better to burn a white candle and ask for guidance and clarity from the Lady. After doing any spell, ground with your Pentacle.

The Crone

The waning and Dark Moon aspect of the Goddess is the Crone. She is the Goddess of the end of things, of harvest and the time after harvest before the new seeds are sprouted, when life seems to come to a stop and the forces of growth are buried deep under the ground. She is the Goddess of banishing, of bringing to an end those things which have reached the point at which they require it. She is the Goddess of the wisdom of old age, of hidden things, of darkness and silence and the solitude realized by each living thing as it dies alone.

The Crone is a Shadow-figure to modern society. Even people who resemble the Crone

are avoided: old people, especially old women, are figures of fear and loathing. Psychologically, there is much to be said about men's fear of women, and of old women in particular. In her book *THE CRONE*, Barbara Walker states:

"Witch persecutions were one more manifestation of men's never-ending effort to deny that negative archetype, the Crone Mother who can destroy. Modern male prejudices against aging women represent another manifestation of the same effort. Such prejudices are rarely studied with any degree of frankness. Freud himself was subject to this male fear, but made heroic efforts to suppress his own knowledge of it...

"The Crone was the feminine equivalent of the old man with a white beard who lived up in the sky and commanded armies of angels: that is, a naive symbol of a collective idea...The symbol represented a uniquely feminine worldview, unaltered by men, who feared the Crone image enough to leave it alone. They assimilated the Virgin and Mother phases of the ancient Goddess to Christianity, combined them, and deprived the combination of divine status; but the Crone phase was too darkly threatening to be so handled.

"Like old women in general, the symbolic Old Woman haunted the fringes of Western culture, largely unnoticed and unacknowledged except when her 'witchcraft' aroused panic. Because she retained so much of her original prepatriarchal character, she is a valuable study object for modern feminists desirous of reassessing the female image."

--B. Walker, *The crone: woman of age, wisdom and power*, Harper & Row, San Francisco, Cal., 1985.

The traditional caricature of the wicked old witch, the hag cackling over her cauldron, filled with disgusting objects and nauseating brews, is a cartoon version of the mighty Lady of Conclusions. Black, her color, is thought of as the color of evil; the very word "sinister" means "left-handed", and the left is the Lunar direction.

There are valid reasons for these fears. The Crone is not an aspect of the Goddess which tolerates familiarities. She is not cute and cuddly, and she wreaks a lot of pain in her dealing-out of destiny. But if the grain were not harvested, cut down in its prime, where would we get bread? And if life were nothing but birth and growth, how long would there be room for life at all? And if the earth did not have a chance to rest and shelter the unborn seeds, how would new birth take place?

We are afraid of her because we do not know her. Of her above all it is said, "No man has lifted my veil." Everyone is afraid to die, and die we all must. The wisdom of the Crone is granted to those who have come through blind faith, have passed by knowledge, and have had the courage to look their own death in the face.

A BANISHING SPELL

(to be done on the dark of the moon)

Ingredients: paper, pen and ink, two mirrors, black thread, candles (black or white), salt water; myrrh oil mixed with comfrey, hemp, dwale (deadly nightshade), thyme, mullein, or any three of these herbs.

Procedure: Write or draw on the paper what you would banish. Charge it with the full force of your repulsion. Anoint with oil, then with salt water, in the form of a waning moon. Fold the paper and place between two mirrors, with the reflecting sides facing IN. Bind them securely together with black thread or yarn and drip candle wax around the edges to seal. While you do this, envision the energy which emanates from the object of your spell being bounced back on itself, unable to pass the barriers you have set up around it. Say:

" Your eyes are shut,
your cord is cut,
go back to the Mother
with Death as your lover.
So mote it be."

Take the spell to a place where it will not be disturbed and bury it, saying,

"By night your eyes are blinded,
by clay your ears are stopped,
by earth your mouth is sealed,
by rock your limbs are bound;
Thus I lay you down to rest,
still and silent in the ground.
As I do will, so mote it be."

When you have finished the burial, kneel on the ground and say:

"By all the power of three times three,
may this spell harm no other nor return to me
As I do will, so mote it be."

Aspects of the God

The Light God

The God of the Waxing Year, Lord of Light, Sun-God, Grain Reborn: Ra, Apollo, Lugh the Long-Handed--his image seems as bright and clear as the sun at dawn. Consort, brother, son of the Lady, he is born at Yule, is celebrated as the Waxing Light at Brigid, overcomes Night at Eostara, becomes the Lady's lover at Beltaine, and dies at the peak of his power at Litha, when his place is taken by his twin, the Dark God of the Waning Year, who will in turn be replaced the following Yule.

This is one way of looking at the Horned One: as twin brothers who vie for the Goddess'

favours, and turn and turn about win the victory. This is the most ancient way of viewing the conflict between growth and decay which is actually no conflict at all, but rather twin aspects of one cyclic process.

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The Dark God

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same consciousness the Celts reckoned the day to begin not with sunrise but with the sunset of what we would call the preceding day. And thus to these people the unconscious darkness of their imagination was not a facet of nature to be feared, but an essential part of their being, out of which conscious thinking could grow. Over the millennia, this mode of consciousness has been replaced by one which fears the darkness, and this corresponds to a way of thinking that marks the day 's beginning at dawn, and sees the positive energies and forces of the day dying out into the evening darkness. The night becomes a place of the death of the light, and not pictured as the source of the light." --Adam McLean, Four Fire Festivals

The shift of consciousness about which McLean writes is nowhere exemplified better than in the transformation of the Lord of Death and what comes after from the Son of the Mother into the Devil. Just as the Light aspects of the God were taken over by the figure of Jesus as Savior, the God's Dark aspects were made into a threat to keep people in line--and are used in that manner and for that purpose to this day. The popularity of "Exorcist"-type movies show that, even in the minds of those who profess to be removed from credulous acceptance of religious dogma, the dark powers of the unconscious are a source of unease. And certainly with good reason. The unconscious is in direct touch with the sources of our being, the subhuman strata from which we have evolved--an origin which threatens some religions enough that they cannot bear to think about it, but take refuge in myths of creation which effectively separate human beings from the "lower" animals. The Dark God is not merely dark--He is also the Goat-foot God, whose animal origins are bared without shame.

When Persephone was carried off by Hades, she screamed and struggled. But sooner or later the screaming and struggling came to an end, and she accepted the gifts of the God: pomegranate seeds, and his love. By them she was transformed from the Maiden into the Queen of the Underworld. How was this accomplished? What we Witches know about the Goddess' transformation is told thus:

"In ancient time, our Lord, the Great Horned One, was as he still is, the Counselor, the Benefactor, but men knew him as the Dread Lord of the Shadows--lonely, stern and just. But our Lady, the Goddess, would solve all mysteries, even the mystery of Death. And so she journeyed to the Nether-lands, and the Guardian of the portal challenged her, saying, 'Strip off thy garments, lay aside thy jewels, for naught may ye bring with thee into this our land.'

"So she laid down her garments and her jewels and was bound as all living must be who seek to enter the realms of Death. Such was her beauty that Death himself knelt and laid his sword and crown at her feet and kissed her feet, saying, 'Blessed are thy feet that have brought thee in these ways. Abide with me, but let me place my cold hand on thy heart.'

"And she replied, 'I love thee not. Why dost thou cause all things that I love and take delight in to fade and die?'

"'Lady,' replied Death, 'Tis age and fate, against which I am helpless. Age causes all things to wither, but when men die, at the end of time, I give them rest and strength so that they may return. But you, you are lovely. Return not: abide with

"But she answered, 'I love thee not.'

"'Then,' said Death, 'An you receive not my hand on your heart, you must kneel at Death's Scourge.'

"'It is fate, better so,' she replied. And she knelt. And Death scourged her tenderly, and she cried, 'I knew the pangs of love.' And Death raised her and said, 'Blessed Be.' And he gave her the fivefold kiss, saying, 'Thus only may you attain to joy and knowledge.' And he taught her all the mysteries, and he gave her the necklace which is the circle of rebirth.

"And she taught him the mystery of the sacred cup which is the cauldron of rebirth. They loved and were one, for there be three great mysteries in the life of man. Magick (love) controls them all. For to fulfill love, you must return again at the same time and at the same place as the loved one, and you must meet, and know and remember and love them again. But to be reborn, you must die, and be made ready for a new body, and to die you must be born, and without love you may not be born. And our Goddess ever inclineth to love and mirth and happiness and guardeth and cherisheth her hidden children in life: And in death She teacheth the way to have communion, and even in the world, She teacheth them the Mystery of the Magick Circle, which is placed between the worlds."

And the Dark God, who stands at the Sunset Door, rules not only over those dark things which we fear to see, and the death of those things which we fear to lose, but also serves to welcome each of us through our transformation and death into the source of new life and light.

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The Deities

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Aspects of the Goddess

The Maiden

The Goddess of the new and waxing moon is the Maiden aspect of the Great Goddess. Under her tutelage are childbirth, childhood, all beginnings of endeavors, increase of that which has been planted, growth, new life, the energies regathered for Spring after the slowing down of Winter, the miraculous transformation at the Feast of Brigid of the old Crone (the Cailleach) into the Virgin, Goddess of poetry, smithcraft, and inspiration. When you see the thin sliver of the first new moon in the sky, kiss your fingers to her and turn the silver coins in your pockets for increase of wealth.

The Maiden has little to do with the God; not that she is looked upon as a physical virgin, but that she is especially the Goddess of the unmarried, uncommitted young woman who belongs to herself alone, and who is not concerned with the relationships between the sexes except in terms of their fruit, the birth of children. She is the Wild Maiden, the Huntress, the free young Goddess who roams the woods untrammelled, and who is quick to punish any infringement upon her privacy (think of Actaeon). Her image is pre-eminent among Dianic Witches, because she is Diana, Lady of the Wild Things, Lady of the Woods, Lady of midnight noonlight chase through bracken and fern---not a comfortable sit-by-the-fire Goddess of home and hearth. So many people, men especially, are afraid of her; she bears sharp weapons and does not hesitate to use them.

But to those, male and female alike, who will regard and value her for what she is, not fear her for what she is not, she is warm and kind. To those who have the courage to keep their own independence, to renew their own spiritual virginity periodically as she must, she brings courage and the will to begin again, to keep on planting seeds even when the harvest will be realized by others yet unborn, The Maiden is the Lady of Potentialities, the Lady of the Future, which can only come to pass if we make it so.

A BEGINNING SPELL

(to be done on a waxing moon)

You will need: seeds, potting soil, flats or egg-cartons, a silver coin (a dime will do), water, salt, incense, wine, oil (a Lunar oil such as jasmine or eucalyptus).

Before you begin:prepare your seeds by folding them in a wet paper towel so they will sprout; mix your potting soil with water in a plastic bag so it is nice and moist.

Place your sprouted seeds, still in their paper towel, and your dime on a plate. Purify the

plate, the flats and the bag of soil with salt and water, taking care not to get any on the soil or the seeds: charge with incense. Take the dime and anoint with wine, saying "I dedicate thee to the Lady's service. May thou increase." Anoint with oil, saying, "As these plants grow, may thou grow, and may I grow." Wipe the excess oil and wine off the coin and place it in the soil in your flat. Cover it over, poke holes in the soil and plant the seeds, saying "May my wealth increase, my health increase, and my service to the Lady increase. As I do will, so mote it be." Pat the soil down over the seeds and give them a drink of fresh water, whispering to them just what it is that you want to grow in your life.

When the seedlings show two permanent leaves, it is time to transplant them to a larger pot. This should be done on a waxing moon also. Take the pots outside to a sheltered spot to harden-off before you transplant them into the ground. Be sure to transplant the dime when you transplant the plants.

One appropriate plant to do this spell with is flax--by the time it is ready to harvest you should be ready to begin making your cords in preparation for initiation or elevation to the next degree. Be sure to talk to your plants, inspect them regularly for insect damage, water them, and put your personal energy into them.

Blessed be!

The Mother

The Goddess of the Full Moon is the Mother aspect of the Great Goddess. She is the most familiar aspect of the Goddess to most people on Earth, because even the most patriarchal religions have had difficulty in stamping out her worship, and several have been content to transform her slightly into an "acceptable" object of veneration. Isis, Queen of Heaven, Mother of the Divine Child, took only a little neatening up to become Virgin Mary, Queen of Heaven, Mother of the Divine Child. The neatening generally takes the form of getting rid of the Goddess' sexual proclivities and concentrating on her motherly ones. But the original version of the Mother, the one who was celebrated in sculpture back in Paleolithic times, is patroness of romantic and erotic love as well as devoted parenthood.

Among her varied forms, both terrible and beautiful, the symbol of the Full Moon catches the human psyche like no other. Connected physically to the tides of Earth and the menstrual cycles of women, shining at night with a mysterious light which carries no heat, she is the symbol par excellence of the unconscious mind and its mysteries; of water, tides and rain; of the abundance of Earth that results from her moist touch on plant life and the urge to procreation which she inspires among animals and men. She is the mirror of the Earth, Dame Habonde, our lady of abundant harvests, of the consummation of desires, of results.

At the same time, she is the visible reminder of the mystery which lives in our own souls, that womanly aspect of each of us, male and female alike. To the God and to

men she is Mother, Sister, Lover, Betrayer; to women she is Mother, Mirror, Self as seen mirrored in another's eyes. To all she is Source and Destination, Glory and Mystery.

A SPELL FOR BRINGING ABOUT YOUR DESIRES:

YOU WILL NEED: a red or green candle, your athame, water, salt, incense, wine and any three of the following oils: bay, jasmine, eucalyptus, wintergreen, rose, almond, mint, olive, pennyroyal, myrrh.

Purify your candle with salt water, charge with incense, and anoint with wine, as usual. Carve your name and your desire on the candle, preferably in runes, concentrating on visualizing your wish come true. Anoint the candle with the oil, whispering your wish to it and concentrating on imbuing the candle with your fixed purpose. When the candle is properly charged, say "So mote it be", and wrap the candle up in a piece of cloth.

Burn the candle on the night of the full moon, after first having cast a circle; if you can manage to have a window open so the full moon will shine upon you, this will help. Purify yourself with salt water, and when you have lit the candle, whisper your wish to it once more. Then sit and stare at the candle flame, feeling it join with your burning will. Do this as long as feels right to you; then break the circle but leave the candle to burn down. (It might be well to put the candle holder in a shallow dish of water. If there is any wax left over after the candle has burnt down, you may wish to save it for a mojo bag ingredient.)

Remember: be very clear in your mind just what you want, because you will get exactly what you ask for. If there is any doubt or uncertainty about the object of this spell, it is better to burn a white candle and ask for guidance and clarity from the Lady. After doing any spell, ground with your Pentacle.

The Crone

The waning and Dark Moon aspect of the Goddess is the Crone. She is the Goddess of the end of things, of harvest and the time after harvest before the new seeds are sprouted, when life seems to come to a stop and the forces of growth are buried deep under the ground. She is the Goddess of banishing, of bringing to an end those things which have reached the point at which they require it. She is the Goddess of the wisdom of old age, of hidden things, of darkness and silence and the solitude realized by each living thing as it dies alone.

The Crone is a Shadow-figure to modern society. Even people who resemble the Crone are avoided: old people, especially old women, are figures of fear and loathing. Psychologically, there is much to be said about men's fear of women, and of old women in particular. In her book *THE CRONE*, Barbara Walker states:

"Witch persecutions were one more manifestation of men's never-ending effort to deny

that negative archetype, the Crone Mother who can destroy. Modern male prejudices against aging women represent another manifestation of the same effort. Such prejudices are rarely studied with any degree of frankness. Freud himself was subject to this male fear, but made heroic efforts to suppress his own knowledge of it...

"The Crone was the feminine equivalent of the old man with a white beard who lived up in the sky and commanded armies of angels: that is, a naive symbol of a collective idea...The symbol represented a uniquely feminine worldview, unaltered by men, who feared the Crone image enough to leave it alone. They assimilated the Virgin and Mother phases of the ancient Goddess to Christianity, combined them, and deprived the combination of divine status; but the Crone phase was too darkly threatening to be so handled.

"Like old women in general, the symbolic Old Woman haunted the fringes of Western culture, largely unnoticed and unacknowledged except when her 'witchcraft' aroused panic. Because she retained so much of her original pre-patriarchal character, she is a valuable study object for modern feminists desirous of reassessing the female image."

--B. Walker, *The crone: woman of age, wisdom and power*, Harper & Row, San Francisco, Cal., 1985.

The traditional caricature of the wicked old witch, the hag cackling over her cauldron, filled with disgusting objects and nauseating brews, is a cartoon version of the mighty Lady of Conclusions. Black, her color, is thought of as the color of evil; the very word "sinister" means "left-handed", and the left is the Lunar direction.

There are valid reasons for these fears. The Crone is not an aspect of the Goddess which tolerates familiarities. She is not cute and cuddly, and she wreaks a lot of pain in her dealing-out of destiny. But if the grain were not harvested, cut down in its prime, where would we get bread? And if life were nothing but birth and growth, how long would there be room for life at all? And if the earth did not have a chance to rest and shelter the unborn seeds, how would new birth take place?

We are afraid of her because we do not know her. Of her above all it is said, "No man has lifted my veil." Everyone is afraid to die, and die we all must. The wisdom of the Crone is granted to those who have come through blind faith, have passed by knowledge, and have had the courage to look their own death in the face.

A BANISHING SPELL

(to be done on the dark of the moon)

Ingredients: paper, pen and ink, two mirrors, black thread, candles (black or white), salt water; myrrh oil mixed with comfrey, hemp, dwale (deadly nightshade), thyme, mullein, or any three of these herbs.

Procedure: Write or draw on the paper what you would banish. Charge it with the full

force of your repulsion. Anoint with oil, then with salt water, in the form of a waning moon. Fold the paper and place between two mirrors, with the reflecting sides facing IN. Bind them securely together with black thread or yarn and drip candle wax around the edges to seal. While you do this, envision the energy which emanates from the object of your spell being bounced back on itself, unable to pass the barriers you have set up around it. Say:

" Your eyes are shut,
your cord is cut,
go back to the Mother
with Death as your lover.
So mote it be."

Take the spell to a place where it will not be disturbed and bury it, saying,

"By night your eyes are blinded,
by clay your ears are stopped,
by earth your mouth is sealed,
by rock your limbs are bound;
Thus I lay you down to rest,
still and silent in the ground.
As I do will, so mote it be."

When you have finished the burial, kneel on the ground and say:

"By all the power of three times three,
may this spell harm no other nor return to me
As I do will, so mote it be."

Aspects of the God

The Light God

The God of the Waxing Year, Lord of Light, Sun-God, Grain Reborn: Ra, Apollo, Lugh the Long-Handed--his image seems as bright and clear as the sun at dawn. Consort, brother, son of the Lady, he is born at Yule, is celebrated as the Waxing Light at Brigid, overcomes Night at Eostara, becomes the Lady's lover at Beltaine, and dies at the peak of his power at Litha, when his place is taken by his twin, the Dark God of the Waning Year, who will in turn be replaced the following Yule.

This is one way of looking at the Horned One: as twin brothers who vie for the Goddess' favors, and turn and turn about win the victory. This is the most ancient way of viewing the conflict between growth and decay which is actually no conflict at all, but rather twin aspects of one cyclic process.

The problem with getting a clear view of the God is complicated by the historical

changes which have taken place in religious attitudes toward the Male and Female Principles. Ever since the superseding of the ancient matriarchal religions, the God has been, on the one hand, inflated into the Sky-Father, Creator, Jehovah, Source of All (thereby usurping the prerogatives of the Mother as well as absorbing all her solar attributes); and on the other hand, suffered the reverse sort of inflation into the Devil, the Evil One, lumped with the World and the Flesh (the Goddess as Moon/Earth and as Venus) into the evil Trinity which opposes the Divine Trinity. Both of these distortions have worked to cause a like distortion in both men's and women's views of the Male Principle within themselves.

Perhaps a saner view of the light aspect of the God is to be found in the image of the Hero Triumphant: born of a virgin with the winter solstice, raised in hiding from the wrath of earthly rulers, he sets forth on his quest against evil, and in the midst of his triumph is transformed. Upon his death/transformation, he departs for the Island of Appletrees, to sleep and await his rebirth. Sound familiar? King Arthur, Hercules, Luke Skywalker, Jesus of Nazareth, Parzifal, all are variants on the same ancient myth. It is from the time of his birth until the time of his triumph that we see him as the Shining One, God of East and South, Air and Fire. To the Light God, the Hero, the quest is against Evil. He has not yet reached the point where he sees ambiguity, for this is the point of death, the point of his transformation into the Dark God, the point of the Hero Transformed, the point of sunset.

Thus it is that the Light God is the god of youth, of confidence, of adventure, of noble ideals, of the pure song which hums in the heart when life is fresh and new. He is the Seed-Sower, Grain Reborn, ever springing up from under the ground, setting the feet to dancing and making the Lady young and lovely again with his love. He is her lover as well as her son and her brother: if she did not love him, she would not keep giving him birth year after year, even knowing that it would grieve her when he dies.

And he always dies. That is what makes him so beautiful. He never grows old, and he always comes back. Making his cyclic reappearance into one historical lifetime, never to be repeated, was the worst blasphemy the Christians could have brought about to the religion of the Goddess; and it was only because the Goddess religions had died out as an effective political force at the time that the cult of Jesus of Nazareth was able to gain its ascendancy--and even then it took several centuries to pull it off.

By medieval times, the Goddess was crammed into the figure of the Virgin Mary, and the Light God and Dark God battled for human souls in a purely masculine field. By this time, too, there was not much to choose between them. Neither the Holy Trinity of the Christians nor the Horned God of the Witches has much resemblance to the true state of the masculine psyche, except insofar as it has been warped by social/cultural factors. The true Male Principle is much more akin to True Thomaas of Erceldoune, who went with the Queen of Elphame and served her for seven years as her true knight: the Hero, the Poet, the one who is transformed by the quest.

I have gone on at such length about the God (and plan to go on longer, about his dark

aspect) because I feel that it is a mistake to ignore him, the way certain segments of the Craft do. Obviously, the Female element in spirituality has been neglected (when not actually being persecuted), and the Macho-Man Sky-Thunderer element in the Male Principle has been elevated clear out of all reason in religions of the past two millennia; however, it is just as macho to do no more than reverse the polarity in an attempt to gain back lost ground. What needs to be done about the God, and about the God in both men and women, is for him to be re-transformed, into the Lady's love, into the ever-living, ever-dying sacrifice (John Barleycorn must die if we are to have beer and bread), into the heroic urge.

This is an age with too few heroes, and too little scope for heroes. Men and women seem to be diminished into mere citizens, slots on the IBM cards, scrabbling for physical survival and losing all nobility of mind in the process. It does not have to be so. Just as contact with the Lady makes all ordinary things Magick, contact with the Lord makes all ordinary activities Heroic.

A SPELL FOR COURAGE

If there is something you are afraid of, write it on a small piece of paper in your own blood. Burn it to ashes, and powder the ashes in a mortar & pestle with some cinnamon, nutmeg, & ginger. Use this mixture to flavor a) cookies, b) mulled wine, c) any other food you like. When you mix in the herbs and ashes, consecrate what you are cooking to the service of the God in you. When you eat or drink, know that what you are physically absorbing is the flesh of the God himself, and that his courage is within you, If you like, you can do an invocation, self-blessing, or other charm which will remind you of this fact. One good one is:

May the Sun shine within me, may Mars lend me his courage and Jupiter his strength. Let the blood of heroes run in my veins, and my feet walk in the paths of heroes. My name is _____, and I am brave. (repeat)

If you can do this while looking in a mirror, so much the better. Do this spell in full daylight, when the sun is shining.

The Dark God

"In the Cycle of the equinox-solstice festivals, the year begins with the spring and the germination of the seed; however, the vision of the Celtic folk sought deeper into the spiritual essence of such a process, and to their consciousness the year began with Samhain, the first of November. Thus they saw the year's beginning marked by the descent of life into the dark of winter, the descent of the seeds into the Earth. With the same consciousness the Celts reckoned the day to begin not with sunrise but with the sunset of what we would call the preceding day. And thus to these people the unconscious darkness of their imagination was not a facet of nature to be feared, but an essential part of their being, out of which conscious thinking could grow. Over the millennia, this mode of consciousness has been replaced by one which fears the

darkness, and this corresponds to a way of thinking that marks the day 's beginning at dawn, and sees the positive energies and forces of the day dying out into the evening darkness. The night becomes a place of the death of the light, and not pictured as the source of the light." --Adam McLean, Four Fire Festivals

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Aspects of the Goddess

The Maiden

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(to be done on a waxing moon)

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Before you begin:prepare your seeds by folding them in a wet paper towel so they will sprout; mix your potting soil with water in a plastic bag so it is nice and moist.

Place your sprouted seeds, still in their paper towel, and your dime on a plate. Purify the plate, the flats and the bag of soil with salt and water, taking care not to get any on the soil or the seeds: charge with incense. Take the dime and anoint with wine, saying "I dedicate thee to the Lady's service. May thou increase." Anoint with oil, saying, "As these plants grow, may thou grow, and may I grow." Wipe the excess oil and wine off the coin and place it in the soil in your flat. Cover it over, poke holes in the soil and plant

the seeds, saying "May my wealth increase, my health increase, and my service to the Lady increase. As I do will, so mote it be." Pat the soil down over the seeds and give them a drink of fresh water, whispering to them just what it is that you want to grow in your life.

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Blessed be!

The Mother

The Goddess of the Full Moon is the Mother aspect of the Great Goddess. She is the most familiar aspect of the Goddess to most people on Earth, because even the most patriarchal religions have had difficulty in stamping out her worship, and several have been content to transform her slightly into an "acceptable" object of veneration. Isis, Queen of Heaven, Mother of the Divine Child, took only a little neatening up to become Virgin Mary, Queen of Heaven, Mother of the Divine Child. The neatening generally takes the form of getting rid of the Goddess' sexual proclivities and concentrating on her motherly ones. But the original version of the Mother, the one who was celebrated in sculpture back in Paleolithic times, is patroness of romantic and erotic love as well as devoted parenthood.

Among her varied forms, both terrible and beautiful, the symbol of the Full Moon catches the human psyche like no other. Connected physically to the tides of Earth and the menstrual cycles of women, shining at night with a mysterious light which carries no heat, she is the symbol par excellence of the unconscious mind and its mysteries; of water, tides and rain; of the abundance of Earth that results from her moist touch on plant life and the urge to procreation which she inspires among animals and men. She is the mirror of the Earth, Dame Habonde, our lady of abundant harvests, of the consummation of desires, of results.

At the same time, she is the visible reminder of the mystery which lives in our own souls, that womanly aspect of each of us, male and female alike. To the God and to men she is Mother, Sister, Lover, Betrayer; to women she is Mother, Mirror, Self as seen mirrored in another's eyes. To all she is Source and Destination, Glory and Mystery.

A SPELL FOR BRINGING ABOUT YOUR DESIRES:

YOU WILL NEED: a red or green candle, your athame, water, salt, incense, wine and any three of the following oils: bay, jasmine, eucalyptus, wintergreen, rose, almond, mint, olive, pennyroyal, myrrh.

Purify your candle with salt water, charge with incense, and anoint with wine, as usual. Carve your name and your desire on the candle, preferably in runes, concentrating on visualizing your wish come true. Anoint the candle with the oil, whispering your wish to it and concentrating on imbuing the candle with your fixed purpose. When the candle is properly charged, say "So mote it be", and wrap the candle up in a piece of cloth.

Burn the candle on the night of the full moon, after first having cast a circle; if you can manage to have a window open so the full moon will shine upon you, this will help. Purify yourself with salt water, and when you have lit the candle, whisper your wish to it once more. Then sit and stare at the candle flame, feeling it join with your burning will. Do this as long as feels right to you; then break the circle but leave the candle to burn down. (It might be well to put the candle holder in a shallow dish of water. If there is any wax left over after the candle has burnt down, you may wish to save it for a mojo bag ingredient.)

Remember: be very clear in your mind just what you want, because you will get exactly what you ask for. If there is any doubt or uncertainty about the object of this spell, it is better to burn a white candle and ask for guidance and clarity from the Lady. After doing any spell, ground with your Pentacle.

The Crone

The waning and Dark Moon aspect of the Goddess is the Crone. She is the Goddess of the end of things, of harvest and the time after harvest before the new seeds are sprouted, when life seems to come to a stop and the forces of growth are buried deep under the ground. She is the Goddess of banishing, of bringing to an end those things which have reached the point at which they require it. She is the Goddess of the wisdom of old age, of hidden things, of darkness and silence and the solitude realized by each living thing as it dies alone.

The Crone is a Shadow-figure to modern society. Even people who resemble the Crone are avoided: old people, especially old women, are figures of fear and loathing. Psychologically, there is much to be said about men's fear of women, and of old women in particular. In her book *THE CRONE*, Barbara Walker states:

"Witch persecutions were one more manifestation of men's never-ending effort to deny that negative archetype, the Crone Mother who can destroy. Modern male prejudices against aging women represent another manifestation of the same effort. Such prejudices are rarely studied with any degree of frankness. Freud himself was subject to this male fear, but made heroic efforts to suppress his own knowledge of it...

"The Crone was the feminine equivalent of the old man with a white beard who lived up in the sky and commanded armies of angels: that is, a naive symbol of a collective idea...The symbol represented a uniquely feminine worldview, unaltered by men, who feared the Crone image enough to leave it alone. They assimilated the Virgin and Mother phases of the ancient Goddess to Christianity, combined them, and deprived the combination of divine status; but the Crone phase was too darkly threatening to be so handled.

"Like old women in general, the symbolic Old Woman haunted the fringes of Western culture, largely unnoticed and unacknowledged except when her 'witchcraft' aroused panic. Because she retained so much of her original prepatriarchal character, she is a valuable study object for modern feminists desirous of reassessing the female image."

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The traditional caricature of the wicked old witch, the hag cackling over her cauldron, filled with disgusting objects and nauseating brews, is a cartoon version of the mighty Lady of Conclusions. Black, her color, is thought of as the color of evil; the very word "sinister" means "left-handed", and the left is the Lunar direction.

There are valid reasons for these fears. The Crone is not an aspect of the Goddess which tolerates familiarities. She is not cute and cuddly, and she wreaks a lot of pain in her dealing-out of destiny. But if the grain were not harvested, cut down in its prime, where would we get bread? And if life were nothing but birth and growth, how long would there be room for life at all? And if the earth did not have a chance to rest and shelter the unborn seeds, how would new birth take place?

We are afraid of her because we do not know her. Of her above all it is said, "No man has lifted my veil." Everyone is afraid to die, and die we all must. The wisdom of the Crone is granted to those who have come through blind faith, have passed by knowledge, and have had the courage to look their own death in the face.

A BANISHING SPELL

(to be done on the dark of the moon)

Ingredients: paper, pen and ink, two mirrors, black thread, candles (black or white), salt water; myrrh oil mixed with comfrey, hemp, dwale (deadly nightshade), thyme, mullein, or any three of these herbs.

Procedure: Write or draw on the paper what you would banish. Charge it with the full force of your repulsion. Anoint with oil, then with salt water, in the form of a waning moon. Fold the paper and place between two mirrors, with the reflecting sides facing IN. Bind them securely together with black thread or yarn and drip candle wax around the edges to seal. While you do this, envision the energy which emanates from the object of your spell being bounced back on itself, unable to pass the barriers you have set up

around it. Say:

" Your eyes are shut,
your cord is cut,
go back to the Mother
with Death as your lover.
So mote it be."

Take the spell to a place where it will not be disturbed and bury it, saying,

"By night your eyes are blinded,
by clay your ears are stopped,
by earth your mouth is sealed,
by rock your limbs are bound;
Thus I lay you down to rest,
still and silent in the ground.
As I do will, so mote it be."

When you have finished the burial, kneel on the ground and say:

"By all the power of three times three,
may this spell harm no other nor return to me
As I do will, so mote it be."

Aspects of the God

The Light God

The God of the Waxing Year, Lord of Light, Sun-God, Grain Reborn: Ra, Apollo, Lugh the Long-Handed--his image seems as bright and clear as the sun at dawn. Consort, brother, son of the Lady, he is born at Yule, is celebrated as the Waxing Light at Brigid, overcomes Night at Eostara, becomes the Lady's lover at Beltaine, and dies at the peak of his power at Litha, when his place is taken by his twin, the Dark God of the Waning Year, who will in turn be replaced the following Yule.

This is one way of looking at the Horned One: as twin brothers who vie for the Goddess' favors, and turn and turn about win the victory. This is the most ancient way of viewing the conflict between growth and decay which is actually no conflict at all, but rather twin aspects of one cyclic process.

The problem with getting a clear view of the God is complicated by the historical changes which have taken place in religious attitudes toward the Male and Female Principles. Ever since the superseding of the ancient matriarchal religions, the God has been, on the one hand, inflated into the Sky-Father, Creator, Jehovah, Source of All (thereby usurping the prerogatives of the Mother as well as absorbing all her solar attributes); and on the other hand, suffered the reverse sort of inflation into the Devil,

the Evil One, lumped with the World and the Flesh (the Goddess as Moon/Earth and as Venus) into the evil Trinity which opposes the Divine Trinity. Both of these distortions have worked to cause a like distortion in both men's and women's views of the Male Principle within themselves.

Perhaps a saner view of the light aspect of the God is to be found in the image of the Hero Triumphant: born of a virgin with the winter solstice, raised in hiding from the wrath of earthly rulers, he sets forth on his quest against evil, and in the midst of his triumph is transformed. Upon his death/transformation, he departs for the Island of Appletrees, to sleep and await his rebirth. Sound familiar? King Arthur, Hercules, Luke Skywalker, Jesus of Nazareth, Parzifal, all are variants on the same ancient myth. It is from the time of his birth until the time of his triumph that we see him as the Shining One, God of East and South, Air and Fire. To the Light God, the Hero, the quest is against Evil. He has not yet reached the point where he sees ambiguity, for this is the point of death, the point of his transformation into the Dark God, the point of the Hero Transformed, the point of sunset.

Thus it is that the Light God is the god of youth, of confidence, of adventure, of noble ideals, of the pure song which hums in the heart when life is fresh and new. He is the Seed-Sower, Grain Reborn, ever springing up from under the ground, setting the feet to dancing and making the Lady young and lovely again with his love. He is her lover as well as her son and her brother: if she did not love him, she would not keep giving him birth year after year, even knowing that it would grieve her when he dies.

And he always dies. That is what makes him so beautiful. He never grows old, and he always comes back. Making his cyclic reappearance into one historical lifetime, never to be repeated, was the worst blasphemy the Christians could have brought about to the religion of the Goddess; and it was only because the Goddess religions had died out as an effective political force at the time that the cult of Jesus of Nazareth was able to gain its ascendancy--and even then it took several centuries to pull it off.

By medieval times, the Goddess was crammed into the figure of the Virgin Mary, and the Light God and Dark God battled for human souls in a purely masculine field. By this time, too, there was not much to choose between them. Neither the Holy Trinity of the Christians nor the Horned God of the Witches has much resemblance to the true state of the masculine psyche, except insofar as it has been warped by social/cultural factors. The true Male Principle is much more akin to True Thomaas of Erceldoune, who went with the Queen of Elphame and served her for seven years as her true knight: the Hero, the Poet, the one who is transformed by the quest.

I have gone on at such length about the God (and plan to go on longer, about his dark aspect) because I feel that it is a mistake to ignore him, the way certain segments of the Craft do. Obviously, the Female element in spirituality has been neglected (when not actually being persecuted), and the Macho-Man Sky-Thunderer element in the Male Principle has been elevated clear out of all reason in religions of the past two millennia; however, it is just as macho to do no more than reverse the polarity in an attempt to

gain back lost ground. What needs to be done about the God, and about the God in both men and women, is for him to be re-transformed, into the Lady's love, into the ever-living, ever-dying sacrifice (John Barleycorn must die if we are to have beer and bread), into the heroic urge.

This is an age with too few heroes, and too little scope for heroes. Men and women seem to be diminished into mere citizens, slots on the IBM cards, scrabbling for physical survival and losing all nobility of mind in the process. It does not have to be so. Just as contact with the Lady makes all ordinary things Magick, contact with the Lord makes all ordinary activities Heroic.

A SPELL FOR COURAGE

If there is something you are afraid of, write it on a small piece of paper in your own blood. Burn it to ashes, and powder the ashes in a mortar & pestle with some cinnamon, nutmeg, & ginger. Use this mixture to flavor a) cookies, b) mulled wine, c) any other food you like. When you mix in the herbs and ashes, consecrate what you are cooking to the service of the God in you. When you eat or drink, know that what you are physically absorbing is the flesh of the God himself, and that his courage is within you, If you like, you can do an invocation, self-blessing, or other charm which will remind you of this fact. One good one is:

May the Sun shine within me, may Mars lend me his courage and Jupiter his strength. Let the blood of heroes run in my veins, and my feet walk in the paths of heroes. My name is _____, and I am brave. (repeat)

If you can do this while looking in a mirror, so much the better. Do this spell in full daylight, when the sun is shining.

The Dark God

"In the Cycle of the equinox-solstice festivals, the year begins with the spring and the germination of the seed; however, the vision of the Celtic folk sought deeper into the spiritual essence of such a process, and to their consciousness the year began with Samhain, the first of November. Thus they saw the year's beginning marked by the descent of life into the dark of winter, the descent of the seeds into the Earth. With the same consciousness the Celts reckoned the day to begin not with sunrise but with the sunset of what we would call the preceding day. And thus to these people the unconscious darkness of their imagination was not a facet of nature to be feared, but an essential part of their being, out of which conscious thinking could grow. Over the millennia, this mode of consciousness has been replaced by one which fears the darkness, and this corresponds to a way of thinking that marks the day 's beginning at dawn, and sees the positive energies and forces of the day dying out into the evening darkness. The night becomes a place of the death of the light, and not pictured as the source of the light." --Adam McLean, Four Fire Festivals

The shift of consciousness about which McLean writes is nowhere exemplified better than in the transformation of the Lord of Death and what comes after from the Son of the Mother into the Devil. Just as the Light aspects of the God were taken over by the figure of Jesus as Savior, the God's Dark aspects were made into a threat to keep people in line--and are used in that manner and for that purpose to this day. The popularity of "Exorcist"-type movies show that, even in the minds of those who profess to be removed from credulous acceptance of religious dogma, the dark powers of the unconscious are a source of unease. And certainly with good reason. The unconscious is in direct touch with the sources of our being, the subhuman strata from which we have evolved--an origin which threatens some religions enough that they cannot bear to think about it, but take refuge in myths of creation which effectively separate human beings from the "lower" animals. The Dark God is not merely dark--He is also the Goat-foot God, whose animal origins are bared without shame.

When Persephone was carried off by Hades, she screamed and struggled. But sooner or later the screaming and struggling came to an end, and she accepted the gifts of the God: pomegranate seeds, and his love. By them she was transformed from the Maiden into the Queen of the Underworld. How was this accomplished? What we Witches know about the Goddess' transformation is told thus:

"In ancient time, our Lord, the Great Horned One, was as he still is, the Counselor, the Benefactor, but men knew him as the Dread Lord of the Shadows--lonely, stern and just. But our Lady, the Goddess, would solve all mysteries, even the mystery of Death. And so she journeyed to the Nether-lands, and the Guardian of the portal challenged her, saying, 'Strip off thy garments, lay aside thy jewels, for naught may ye bring with thee into this our land.'

"So she laid down her garments and her jewels and was bound as all living must be who seek to enter the realms of Death. Such was her beauty that Death himself knelt and laid his sword and crown at her feet and kissed her feet, saying, 'Blessed are thy feet that have brought thee in these ways. Abide with me, but let me place my cold hand on thy heart.'

"And she replied, 'I love thee not. Why dost thou cause all things that I love and take delight in to fade and die?'

"'Lady,' replied Death, 'Tis age and fate, against which I am helpless. Age causes all things to wither, but when men die, at the end of time, I give them rest and strength so that they may return. But you, you are lovely. Return not: abide with

"But she answered, 'I love thee not.'

"'Then,' said Death, 'An you receive not my hand on your heart, you must kneel at Death's Scourge.'

"'It is fate, better so,' she replied. And she knelt. And Death scourged her tenderly, and

she cried, 'I knew the pangs of love.' And Death raised her and said, 'Blessed Be.' And he gave her the fivefold kiss, saying, 'Thus only may you attain to joy and knowledge.' And he taught her all the mysteries, and he gave her the necklace which is the circle of rebirth.

"And she taught him the mystery of the sacred cup which is the cauldron of rebirth. They loved and were one, for there be three great mysteries in the life of man. Magick (love) controls them all. For to fulfill love, you must return again at the same time and at the same place as the loved one, and you must meet, and know and remember and love them again. But to be reborn, you must die, and be made ready for a new body, and to die you must be born, and without love you may not be born. And our Goddess ever inclineth to love and mirth and happiness and guardeth and cherisheth her hidden children in life: And in death She teacheth the way to have communion, and even in the world, She teacheth them the Mystery of the Magick Circle, which is placed between the worlds."

And the Dark God, who stands at the Sunset Door, rules not only over those dark things which we fear to see, and the death of those things which we fear to lose, but also serves to welcome each of us through our transformation and death into the source of new life and light.

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The Deities

Aspects of the Goddess:

- The Maiden
- The Mother
- The Crone

Aspects of the God:

- The Light God
- The Dark God

Aspects of the Goddess

The Maiden

The Goddess of the new and waxing moon is the Maiden aspect of the Great Goddess.

Under her tutelage are childbirth, childhood, all beginnings of endeavors, increase of that which has been planted, growth, new life, the energies regathered for Spring after the slowing down of Winter, the miraculous transformation at the Feast of Brigid of the old Crone (the Cailleach) into the Virgin, Goddess of poetry, smithcraft, and inspiration. When you see the thin sliver of the first new moon in the sky, kiss your fingers to her and turn the silver coins in your pockets for increase of wealth.

The Maiden has little to do with the God; not that she is looked upon as a physical virgin, but that she is especially the Goddess of the unmarried, uncommitted young woman who belongs to herself alone, and who is not concerned with the relationships between the sexes except in terms of their fruit, the birth of children. She is the Wild Maiden, the Huntress, the free young Goddess who roams the woods untrammelled, and who is quick to punish any infringement upon her privacy (think of Actaeon). Her image is pre-eminent among Dianic Witches, because she is Diana, Lady of the Wild Things, Lady of the Woods, Lady of midnight noonlight chase through bracken and fern---not a comfortable sit-by-the-fire Goddess of home and hearth. So many people, men especially, are afraid of her; she bears sharp weapons and does not hesitate to use them.

But to those, male and female alike, who will regard and value her for what she is, not fear her for what she is not, she is warm and kind. To those who have the courage to keep their own independence, to renew their own spiritual virginity periodically as she must, she brings courage and the will to begin again, to keep on planting seeds even when the harvest will be realized by others yet unborn, The Maiden is the Lady of Potentialities, the Lady of the Future, which can only come to pass if we make it so.

A BEGINNING SPELL

(to be done on a waxing moon)

You will need: seeds, potting soil, flats or egg-cartons, a silver coin (a dime will do), water, salt, incense, wine, oil (a Lunar oil such as jasmine or eucalyptus).

Before you begin:prepare your seeds by folding them in a wet paper towel so they will sprout; mix your potting soil with water in a plastic bag so it is nice and moist.

Place your sprouted seeds, still in their paper towel, and your dime on a plate. Purify the plate, the flats and the bag of soil with salt and water, taking care not to get any on the soil or the seeds: charge with incense. Take the dime and anoint with wine, saying "I dedicate thee to the Lady's service. May thou increase." Anoint with oil, saying, "As these plants grow, may thou grow, and may I grow." Wipe the excess oil and wine off the coin and place it in the soil in your flat. Cover it over, poke holes in the soil and plant the seeds, saying "May my wealth increase, my health increase, and my service to the Lady increase. As I do will, so mote it be." Pat the soil down over the seeds and give them a drink of fresh water, whispering to them just what it is that you want to grow in your life.

When the seedlings show two permanent leaves, it is time to transplant them to a larger pot. This should be done on a waxing moon also. Take the pots outside to a sheltered spot to harden-off before you transplant them into the ground. Be sure to transplant the dime when you transplant the plants.

One appropriate plant to do this spell with is flax--by the time it is ready to harvest you should be ready to begin making your cords in preparation for initiation or elevation to the next degree. Be sure to talk to your plants, inspect them regularly for insect damage, water them, and put your personal energy into them.

Blessed be!

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This is one way of looking at the Horned One: as twin brothers who vie for the Goddess' favors, and turn and turn about win the victory. This is the most ancient way of viewing the conflict between growth and decay which is actually no conflict at all, but rather twin aspects of one cyclic process.

The problem with getting a clear view of the God is complicated by the historical changes which have taken place in religious attitudes toward the Male and Female Principles. Ever since the superseding of the ancient matriarchal religions, the God has been, on the one hand, inflated into the Sky-Father, Creator, Jehovah, Source of All (thereby usurping the prerogatives of the Mother as well as absorbing all her solar attributes); and on the other hand, suffered the reverse sort of inflation into the Devil, the Evil One, lumped with the World and the Flesh (the Goddess as Moon/Earth and as Venus) into the evil Trinity which opposes the Divine Trinity. Both of these distortions have worked to cause a like distortion in both men's and women's views of the Male Principle within themselves.

Perhaps a saner view of the light aspect of the God is to be found in the image of the Hero Triumphant: born of a virgin with the winter solstice, raised in hiding from the wrath of earthly rulers, he sets forth on his quest against evil, and in the midst of his triumph is transformed. Upon his death/transformation, he departs for the Island of Appletrees, to sleep and await his rebirth. Sound familiar? King Arthur, Hercules, Luke Skywalker, Jesus of Nazareth, Parzifal, all are variants on the same ancient myth. It is from the time of his birth until the time of his triumph that we see him as the Shining One, God of East and South, Air and Fire. To the Light God, the Hero, the quest is against Evil. He has not yet reached the point where he sees ambiguity, for this is the point of death, the point of his transformation into the Dark God, the point of the Hero Transformed, the point of sunset.

Thus it is that the Light God is the god of youth, of confidence, of adventure, of noble ideals, of the pure song which hums in the heart when life is fresh and new. He is the Seed-Sower, Grain Reborn, ever springing up from under the ground, setting the feet to dancing and making the Lady young and lovely again with his love. He is her lover as well as her son and her brother: if she did not love him, she would not keep giving him birth year after year, even knowing that it would grieve her when he dies.

And he always dies. That is what makes him so beautiful. He never grows old, and he always comes back. Making his cyclic reappearance into one historical lifetime, never to be repeated, was the worst blasphemy the Christians could have brought about to the religion of the Goddess; and it was only because the Goddess religions had died out as an effective political force at the time that the cult of Jesus of Nazareth was able to gain its ascendancy--and even then it took several centuries to pull it off.

By medieval times, the Goddess was crammed into the figure of the Virgin Mary, and the Light God and Dark God battled for human souls in a purely masculine field. By this time, too, there was not much to choose between them. Neither the Holy Trinity of the Christians nor the Horned God of the Witches has much resemblance to the true state of the masculine psyche, except insofar as it has been warped by social/cultural factors. The true Male Principle is much more akin to True Thomaas of Erceldoune, who went with the Queen of Elphame and served her for seven years as her true knight: the Hero, the Poet, the one who is transformed by the quest.

I have gone on at such length about the God (and plan to go on longer, about his dark aspect) because I feel that it is a mistake to ignore him, the way certain segments of the Craft do. Obviously, the Female element in spirituality has been neglected (when not actually being persecuted), and the Macho-Man Sky-Thunderer element in the Male Principle has been elevated clear out of all reason in religions of the past two millennia; however, it is just as macho to do no more than reverse the polarity in an attempt to gain back lost ground. What needs to be done about the God, and about the God in both men and women, is for him to be re-transformed, into the Lady's love, into the ever-living, ever-dying sacrifice (John Barleycorn must die if we are to have beer and bread), into the heroic urge.

This is an age with too few heroes, and too little scope for heroes. Men and women seem to be diminished into mere citizens, slots on the IBM cards, scrabbling for physical survival and losing all nobility of mind in the process. It does not have to be so. Just as contact with the Lady makes all ordinary things Magick, contact with the Lord makes all ordinary activities Heroic.

A SPELL FOR COURAGE

If there is something you are afraid of, write it on a small piece of paper in your own blood. Burn it to ashes, and powder the ashes in a mortar & pestle with some cinnamon, nutmeg, & ginger. Use this mixture to flavor a) cookies, b) mulled wine, c) any other food you like. When you mix in the herbs and ashes, consecrate what you are cooking to the service of the God in you. When you eat or drink, know that what you are physically absorbing is the flesh of the God himself, and that his courage is within you. If you like, you can do an invocation, self-blessing, or other charm which will remind you of this fact. One good one is:

May the Sun shine within me, may Mars lend me his courage and Jupiter his strength. Let the blood of heroes run in my veins, and my feet walk in the paths of heroes. My name is _____, and I am brave. (repeat)

If you can do this while looking in a mirror, so much the better. Do this spell in full daylight, when the sun is shining.

The Dark God

"In the Cycle of the equinox-solstice festivals, the year begins with the spring and the germination of the seed; however, the vision of the Celtic folk sought deeper into the spiritual essence of such a process, and to their consciousness the year began with Samhain, the first of November. Thus they saw the year's beginning marked by the descent of life into the dark of winter, the descent of the seeds into the Earth. With the same consciousness the Celts reckoned the day to begin not with sunrise but with the sunset of what we would call the preceding day. And thus to these people the unconscious darkness of their imagination was not a facet of nature to be feared, but an essential part of their being, out of which conscious thinking could grow. Over the millennia, this mode of consciousness has been replaced by one which fears the darkness, and this corresponds to a way of thinking that marks the day 's beginning at dawn, and sees the positive energies and forces of the day dying out into the evening darkness. The night becomes a place of the death of the light, and not pictured as the source of the light." --Adam McLean, Four Fire Festivals

The shift of consciousness about which McLean writes is nowhere exemplified better than in the transformation of the Lord of Death and what comes after from the Son of the Mother into the Devil. Just as the Light aspects of the God were taken over by the figure of Jesus as Savior, the God's Dark aspects were made into a threat to keep people in line--and are used in that manner and for that purpose to this day. The

popularity of "Exorcist"-type movies show that, even in the minds of those who profess to be removed from credulous acceptance of religious dogma, the dark powers of the unconscious are a source of unease. And certainly with good reason. The unconscious is in direct touch with the sources of our being, the subhuman strata from which we have evolved--an origin which threatens some religions enough that they cannot bear to think about it, but take refuge in myths of creation which effectively separate human beings from the "lower" animals. The Dark God is not merely dark--He is also the Goat-foot God, whose animal origins are bared without shame.

When Persephone was carried off by Hades, she screamed and struggled. But sooner or later the screaming and struggling came to an end, and she accepted the gifts of the God: pomegranate seeds, and his love. By them she was transformed from the Maiden into the Queen of the Underworld. How was this accomplished? What we Witches know about the Goddess' transformation is told thus:

"In ancient time, our Lord, the Great Horned One, was as he still is, the Counselor, the Benefactor, but men knew him as the Dread Lord of the Shadows--lonely, stern and just. But our Lady, the Goddess, would solve all mysteries, even the mystery of Death. And so she journeyed to the Nether-lands, and the Guardian of the portal challenged her, saying, 'Strip off thy garments, lay aside thy jewels, for naught may ye bring with thee into this our land.'

"So she laid down her garments and her jewels and was bound as all living must be who seek to enter the realms of Death. Such was her beauty that Death himself knelt and laid his sword and crown at her feet and kissed her feet, saying, 'Blessed are thy feet that have brought thee in these ways. Abide with me, but let me place my cold hand on thy heart.'

"And she replied, 'I love thee not. Why dost thou cause all things that I love and take delight in to fade and die?'

"'Lady,' replied Death, 'Tis age and fate, against which I am helpless. Age causes all things to wither, but when men die, at the end of time, I give them rest and strength so that they may return. But you, you are lovely. Return not: abide with

"But she answered, 'I love thee not.'

"'Then,' said Death, 'An you receive not my hand on your heart, you must kneel at Death's Scourge.'

"'It is fate, better so,' she replied. And she knelt. And Death scourged her tenderly, and she cried, 'I knew the pangs of love.' And Death raised her and said, 'Blessed Be.' And he gave her the fivefold kiss, saying, 'Thus only may you attain to joy and knowledge.' And he taught her all the mysteries, and he gave her the necklace which is the circle of rebirth.

"And she taught him the mystery of the sacred cup which is the cauldron of rebirth. They loved and were one, for there be three great mysteries in the life of man. Magick (love) controls them all. For to fulfill love, you must return again at the same time and at the same place as the loved one, and you must meet, and know and remember and love them again. But to be reborn, you must die, and be made ready for a new body, and to die you must be born, and without love you may not be born. And our Goddess ever inclineth to love and mirth and happiness and guardeth and cherisheth her hidden children in life: And in death She teacheth the way to have communion, and even in the world, She teacheth them the Mystery of the Magick Circle, which is placed between the worlds."

And the Dark God, who stands at the Sunset Door, rules not only over those dark things which we fear to see, and the death of those things which we fear to lose, but also serves to welcome each of us through our transformation and death into the source of new life and light.

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The Vision Quest

Prior to initiation as an adult (a full member of society), many tribal cultures require that the initiate go through an ordeal, or a vision quest. In ancient times, the initiate would be incubated, that is, made to descend physically into a dark place reminiscent of the Underworld of the unconscious, and to sleep there for a specified time. In other cultures, the initiate would be sent out into the woods or desert alone, to face whatever demons

he carried in his heart and come back with a sign-- a vision, a new name, some token of transformation which would make him worthy to be a warrior.

In the Craft, initiates take new names. These names are kept secret from all but one's co-covenanters, and are used in speaking to the Gods as identifiers which have come from within rather than being bestowed by society. One's witch-name is a precious secret, and the only magickal tool that one can never lose.

The quest to find one's own true witch-name is a vision quest in the old Native American sense, even if the individual does not physically go out into the woods for three days and nights. It is the quest in the dark of the mind, to be engaged in alone. Nobody can go with you, and there is no real way of communicating what happens during such a quest to anyone else.

If you have studied and practiced ritual and Magick as you have been taught, and thought about what the teachings mean to you; if you are open to messages from your own hidden depths, and willing to incorporate them into your conscious life; if you are able to look at yourself clearly, then you should have little trouble with your own vision quest. But if you have learned Magick and ritual by rote only; if you do not listen to your dreams; if you are enmeshed in self-deception, then it is better for you not to make the attempt, and to wait until you are more ready. The truth is that not all survive initiation. Not all are ready to look the facts in the face and deal with them. Not all are able to be transformed.

Think it no shame to be afraid. Fear is a healthy reaction to the presence of the Shadow. Only fools go without fear through the Gateless Gate. But there are certain questions you must ask if you are to survive intact the voyage through your own dark places: What do these things mean? and, Who do they serve? It was through his failure to ask these questions that Perceval failed for so long in his quest for the Grail.

We have arrived at a place in the learning of the Craft at which the teacher can no longer say, "This is how it is done." When you go on your vision quest, you go alone and without words. The teacher can only point to the entrance of the cave. What journeys you make in the darkness within, and what dragons you slay, are up to you. Only remember that in what has been said and done before, in the whole course of the teachings, there are hints on how to conduct yourself before the Mighty Ones.

When you return (if you return), you will be on the path of dedication to the Goddess, whose ways are those of Life and Death. Think well before you attempt to tread those paths-- even the Lady had to pass through the realms of Death and feel his scourge. You do not choose your own ordeal-- it is built into you from your life experiences. The rewards of success are sweet: self-knowledge and the unblocking of the power that flows through you. The price is steep: you must let go of any grasping of that power as personally yours, and become transparent to it. And the price will be paid daily for the rest of your life.

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Two Samhain Rituals

A Public Samhain Ritual

This ritual was originally written by a group of Compost Covenanters, directed by Jo Steen, and performed by a cast of dozens on a beach in San Francisco on Samhain night of 1980, and repeated at the site of the old Sutro mansion, high on a hill overlooking the ocean, on Samhain 1988. It was the last big public ritual Compost ever did, and was made notable by the sound (during one of the more solemn moments) of a voice exclaiming, "Holy Shit!!" This was the startled reaction of a group of teenagers who had come up to the site in order to drink, smoke a little weed, and do whatever else teenagers do on high windy hills on Halloween night. They very gamely hung around for the rest of the ritual, and we shared their beer afterward, having (we hoped) educated them a little about Witches.

Compost was indeed Holy Shit.....

PERSONNEL: Centering (male or female) High Priestess, Horned God, Death (male or female), Hekate, percussionist for gongs and rattle

CENTERING: Come now together. Join hands and share with us the understanding of death and rebirth; be as a tree which spreads its roots in the earth, and its branches to the heavens, standing witness to eternal transformation. For death is not a wall against which all thought and all consciousness must cease, but a door, a door to new life, to wonder, and to enchantment. ...Be still now and look within, with closed eyes. Feel...feel. Feel the earth beneath your feet, feel the roots of your being re-connect with the earth, with the Mother. And as you do, your mind relaxes, your body relaxes, with each breath you take. Breathe deeply, gently, and imagine to yourself a leaf, full of life, as it fades and transforms, to fall and float gently downward, into a flowing stream. In your mind's eye of imagination, see it float effortlessly, down and down the stream of life....See it reach the sea, the vastness of infinity. See it sink gently beneath the waves,

gradually releasing its form to become one with the infinite. Whence it came, thence it returns, to feed and nourish new forms, new life, new consciousness, Thus the cycle continues eternal, no thing truly lost, all things truly one. ...And now, open your eyes; feel the warmth, the love and the light of those around you. Let us now begin the ancient rite. Call ye now the powers of the Lord and the Lady, invoke the Force with ourselves and know that that which can be desired can be manifested. Call ye now and be reborn...

ALL: Io! Evohe!

(Purification of altar and preparation of saltwater by HPs)

H.Ps: (in appropriate direction with athame; priest/ess with saltwater and priest/ess with incense follow) Hail, Guardians of the Watchtowers of the East! Powers of Air, powers of the mind! Blow, cleansing winds; sweep away the dust and doubt. We invoke you and call you.

ALL: Come to us! Come to us! Come to us!

H.Ps: Hail, Guardians of the Watchtowers of the South! Powers of Fire, powers of the will! Flame forth, energizing power; burn away cowardice and conceit. We invoke you and call you.

ALL: Come to us! Come to us! Come to us!

H.Ps: Hail, Guardians of the Watchtowers of the West! Powers of Water, powers of the emotions! Flow, ccurrent of dreams; bring forth the hidden vision. We invoke you and call you.

ALL: Come to us! Come to us! Come to us!

H.Ps: Hail, Guardians of the Watchtowers of the North! Powers of Earth, powers of the body! Stand, Mother of mountains; give us your strength. We invoke you and call you.

ALL: Come to us! Come to us! Come to us!

H.Ps: As Above, So Below. The Circle is cast.

ALL:(ad lib) Seed-sower, grain reborn, Horned One, come.

HORNED GOD (enters circle) I am He.

ALL: Sun has set. Night has come.

H.G.: I am the Child of the Night. I am the Winter King.

ALL: Sun has set. Night has come.

H.G.: I am the vine and the harvest. I am the reaper of time.

ALL: Sun has set. Night has come.

H.G.: I am the stag and the hound. I am the dark rider on a white mare.

ALL: Sun has set. Night has come.

H.G.: I am the red river in the cornfield, I am a fallen oak in the grove.

ALL: Sun has set. Night has come.

H.G.: I am the raven's cry at midnight. I am a fearsome beast.

ALL: Sun has set. Night has come.

H.G.: I have torn down cities. I have raised up kings.

ALL: Sun has set. Night has come.

H.G.: I am my mother's son and my father's terror. I am a slain ram.

ALL: Sun has set. Night has come.

H.G.: I am the serpent in the tree. I am the keeper of the keys.

ALL: Sun has set. Night has come.

H.G.: I am purple-haired and two-faced. I am the guardian of the vault.

ALL: Sun has set. Night has come.

H.G.: I am the deliverer from care. I am a woeful countenance.

ALL: Sun has set. Night has come.

H.G.: I am the servant of the triple moon. I am a flaming wheel.

ALL: Sun has set. Night has come.

H.G.: I have danced and hunted. I have devoured my rival.

ALL: Sun has set. Night has come.

H.G.: All are mine as I am Hers. I am the feast in Her cauldron.

ALL: Moon is high (start soft and build)

H.G.: Pan

ALL: Moon is high

H.G.: Sabezios

ALL: Moon is high

H.G.: Dionysus

ALL: Moon is high

H.G.: Cronos

ALL: Moon is high

H.G.: Tammuz

ALL: Moon is high

H.G.: Adonis

ALL: Moon is high

H.G.: Osiris

ALL: Moon is high

H.G.: Shiva

ALL: Moon is high

H.G.: Arawn

ALL: Moon is high

H.G.: Dylan

ALL: Moon is high

H.G.: Arddhu the Dark One

(Pause. DEATH outside circle, draws the triangle and masks)

H. Ps.: Dark Hunter, Destroyer of Worlds, Breaker of Forms, great Alchemist, Transformer.

(RATTLE)

DEATH: (in triangle) I am the changer of form, I am the dark gateway. I am the breaking face of god. I am the deep waters dividing the sands. I am the crucible of life, power of death, gateway to rebirth. I am the shadow grave, the womb from whence all comes again to light. I will transform your rain of sorrow into rainbows of promise.

H.Ps: Death and birth are the children of life. In time we are born. In time we die. Life is immortal. As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be. Blessed be.

ALL: Blessed be.

DEATH: Go into darkness...go into light...go without fury...go without fright...go with the coming...go with the going...here is the reaping...here is the sowing...

ALL: Go into darkness...go into light...go without fury...go without fright...go with the coming...go with the going...here is the reaping...here is the sowing...(ad lib until GONG)

(DEATH salts triangle, unmask, leaves mask in triangle and enters circle)

ALL (except H.Ps, H.G., DEATH, CENTERING): Flores para los muertos, flores para los muertos (repeat ad lib through next section)

HEKATE: Samhain, Halloween, All-Souls.

H.Ps, H.G., DEATH, CENTERING: Night of the Dead

HEKATE: The night death walks the streets and the dead wake.

H.Ps. et al: Day of the Dying

HEKATE: When the veils are thinnest between the worlds.

H.PS. et al: Lady of magick

HEKATE: When the gates open between the worlds.

ALL: (whispering) Triune Lady of Magick

HEKATE: I...Hekate

ALL: (ad lib) Hekate...e-ka-tay...ke-kay tay...hecuba...Kubaba...Kybele...

HEKATE: Hekate...Ke-ka-tay...e-ka-tey...I offer my magick to all those at the crossroads. To all those who dare to ask it, it is given.

ALL: It is given.

H.: To the brave

ALL: It is given.

H.: To the brave

ALL: It is given.

H.: Ask

ALL: It is given.

H.: Ask

ALL: It is given.

H.: Ask

ALL: It is given.

H.: To the great

ALL: It is given.

H.: To the small

ALL: It is given.

H.: To the rich

ALL: It is given.

H.: To the poor

ALL: It is given.

To the good /To the wicked /To the weak / To the strong (etc. ad lib)

CENTERING: Wind, water, earth and fire, bring me the boon that I desire!

ALL: Wind, water, earth and fire, bring me the boon that I desire! (repeat ad lib until GONG)

H.Ps.: Celebrate! (pass wine around circle) Drink! Let us prepare the harvest for this feast of all souls. (Pass cakes around circle) Eat! (pause while cakes and wine go around circle)

H.Ps: O Goddess of the Harvest

ALL: We call you forth

CENTERING: O Spirits of the Darkness and Light

ALL: We call you forth

H.Ps.: O Spirits of Freedom and Truth

ALL: We call you forth

CENTERING: O Spirits of the Warriors for Life

ALL: We call you forth

H.Ps: O Spirits of our ancestors

ALL: We call you forth

CENTERING: O God of Justice and Balance

ALL: We call you forth

H.Ps. and CENTERING. (chanted): Guide us in this time of darkness

H.Ps.: for the California condor

C.: For the bald eagle

H.Ps.: for the passenger pigeon

C.: for the timber wolf

H.Ps.: for the majestic buffalo

C.: for the humpbacked whale

H.Ps.: for the singing dolphin

C.: for the grizzly bear

H.Ps.: for the mountain lion

C.: for the tortured trees

H.Ps.: for the slaughtered tribes

ALL: We pause to remember (pause for thirteen heartbeats)

H.Ps. and CENTERING (chanted): Guide us in this time of darkness

H.Ps.: From the polluters of our planet

ALL: Let us deliver ourselves

C.: From the corruptions of world government

ALL: Let us deliver ourselves

H.Ps.: From the dishonesties of the power brokers

ALL: Let us deliver ourselves

C.: From the distortions of media manipulators

ALL: Let us deliver ourselves

H.Ps.: From the isms of intolerance

ALL: Let us deliver ourselves

C.: From wanton violence

ALL: Let us deliver ourselves

H.Ps.: From prolonged grieving

ALL: Let us deliver ourselves

C.: From anticipation of loss

ALL: Let us deliver ourselves

H.Ps.: From all ugliness of spirit

ALL: Let us deliver ourselves

H. Ps. and C.: In us do the dead live
Water flows downhill through us
The sun cools in our bones
We are joined with all living
In one shining web of energy
In us live the dead who made us
In us live the children unborn
Breathing each others' air
Drinking each others' water
Eating each others' flesh
We grow like a tree from the Earth.

(H.Ps. goes to center with wand. ALL begin wordless chant ad lib until peaked and drop called by H.Ps.)

H.Ps. (facing north with athame): All powers called and gathered here, fill us with your grace and wisdom ere you depart to your lovely realms. Help us understand the truth of our eternal life. The circle is open but unbroken. May the peace of the Goddess go in your hearts. Merry meet and merry part.

ALL: And merry meet again. BLESSED BE!

II. Closed Ritual with Dumb Supper:

Samhain Ritual as performed by Willow H.P., Valerie H.Ps., and various other Compost Coveners and friends

(Setup: regular altar in the North with usual implements; table and altar for the Dead in the West, divided by a veil to represent the veil between the worlds. On both sides of the veil, places are set up for the Dumb Supper; but living flowers decorate the living-world side, and dead ones, skulls, pieces of mirror, and pictures of the dead decorate the dead side. All flowers, dishes, and decorations are white, transparent, or mirrored. There are two point candles for the West, one on either side of the veil. On the veil sits a representation of Eleggua/ Legba/ Hermes, guardian and guide of the threshold. Ritual follows regular Full Moon Rite in purification of coveners and casting of circle.

Then H.P. offers the following toast):

To all the ancient ones from their houses, the Old Ones from above and below. In this time the Gods of the Earth touch our feet, bare upon the ground. Spirits of the Air whisper in our hair and chill our bodies, and from the dark portions watch and wait the Faery Folk that they may join the circle and leave their track upon the ground. It is the

time of the waning year. Winter is upon us. The corn is golden in the winnow heaps. Rains will soon wash sleep into the life-bringing Earth. We are not without fear, we are not without sorrow...Before us are all the signs of Death: the ear of corn is no more green and life is not in it. The Earth is cold and no more will grasses spring jubilant. The Sun but glances upon his sister, the earth..... It is so....Even now....But here also are the signs of life, the eternal promise given to our people. In the death of the corn there is the seed--which is both food for the season of Death and the Beacon which will signal green-growing time and life returning. In the cold of the Earth there is but sleep wherein She will awaken refreshed and renewed, her journey into the Dark Lands ended. And where the Sun journeys he gains new vigor and potency; that in the spring, his blessings shall come ever young!

H.P. (pours wine into the cauldron then drinks): Io! Evohe!

H.Ps. (holding wand and knife in God position): Dread Lord of the shadows, God of Life and Bringer of Death. Yet as the knowledge of thee is Death, open wide, I pray thee, thy gates through which all must pass. Let our dear ones who have gone before return this night to make merry with us. And when our time comes, as it must, O thou, the comforter and consoler, the giver of peace and rest, we will enter thy realm gladly and unafraid. For we know that when rested and refreshed among our dear ones, we will be reborn again. By thy grace and that of the Lady, let it be in the same place and time as our dear ones, that we may love again. O Horned One, descend we pray on (N---) thy High Priest and Witch.

(H.Ps. anoints H.P. with sacred oil)

H.Ps: I consecrate thee with oil. (anoint genitals)
I consecrate thee with wine. (anoint R foot)
I consecrate thee with water. (anoint L knee)
I consecrate thee with air. (anoint R knee)
I consecrate thee with fire. (anoint L foot)
I consecrate thee with power. (anoint genitals)

(H.Ps. holds horns over H.P. while all chant):

All: Dark Death, Bright Sun, Lord of Winds, Come!
(as power builds and peaks, H.Ps. places horns on H.P.'s head)

All: IO EVOHE! IO EVOHE! IO EVOHE!

H.P. (holding wand): IO HEKATE of the shining sky
Of the Earth and under
Dark Goddess of the broad roadways
Sorceress of the crossroads
You who walk by night, smoking torch in hand
Dark twin of day and lover of darkness

Who rejoices in the baying of hounds and spilt blood
We summon you, black-winged leader of souls
HEKATE HEKATE HEKATE
Ancient One, giver of terror and wisdom
Come down Goddess (H.P touches H.Ps. on forehead with wand)
Come up Goddess (touch on feet)
Come in Goddess (touch on heart chakra) to us.

H.Ps. (with hood pulled down so face is concealed): I am the terrible Mother, destroyer of men, slayer of men. No man hath ever seen me unveiled. I am the goddess of war and destruction. I bring the storm and the flood and the relentless fire consuming all in its raging path. I am clothed in the terrors of the night and I spare no mercy. I am this, all this. Beware of me. For I am that in you which is the black cat, the cold eye of the fish. I am that in you which is reptilian, clawed, fanged, hissing and howling at the moon. Beware of me. I am this, all this. And yet ye shall seek me out: for I am that in you which shrieks to be one, given only to the moment of desire, freed from restraints. For I am the Mother, the Vision-Maker, Giver of dreams and omens, Sharer of revelations and the understanding of all things. Enter ye who so desires, calling upon the Mother's name with celebration, and upon your lips ye will share my kiss. Enter ye who so desires the Mother in all her ways, for only then shall ye seek me out. I am the Mother, the Daughter, the Sister. I am the Gateway to all mystery...

All coveners chant: Hail Goddess, Queen of Night!
Hail Goddess, Queen of Light! (H.Ps throws hood back, takes moon horns from altar and crowns self)

THE DUMB SUPPER: (Without a sound and walking backward, approach the veiled shrine of the Dead in the West. Unveil the shrine, light a caandle. Burn incense and offer milk and honey. Mentally chant:)

By the mysteries of the Deep,
By the flames of Banal,
By the Power of the East,
By the Silence of the Night,
And by the holy rites of HEKATE
I call thee by the ties of love,
O spirit of (N---)
To break thy eternal fast with me
SO MOTE IT BE!

(Replenish incense, then go backward and silently to the feasting table, which is set on white cloth for you with quarter portions for each dead guest. You must not look at the places set for the dead. Eat the repast, and when finished walk backward to the shrine of the dead. Replenish incense and extinguish candles. Repeat deceased's name three times, then mentally chant the great necromantic charge):

Allay Fortission Fortissio Allynson Roa!

(Mentally welcome the deceased. Open your eyes slowly and see what you can see. Enjoy this melding of the mind with the dear departed. When the current slackens, chant out loud, but softly):

Your cord is cut, your eyes are shut
Go back to the Mother with Death as your lover
(Repeat and build to a peak. Drop and let the power be released on the winds to travel home with the dead)

LITANY OF SAMHAIN (As in previous ritual, from "O Goddess of the Harvest" to "We grow like a tree from the Earth")

(H.Ps. goes to center with wand. All begin wordless chant ad lib until peaked and drop called by H.Ps.)

H.Ps. (facing north with athame):
Lady of the shining castle
By the Bull I conjure thee
To let the power pass from me
(facing west) Lady of the flowering islands
By the Snakes I conjure thee
To let the power pass from me
(facing south) Lady of the fertile lands
By the Goat I conjure thee
To let the power pass from me
(facing east) Lady of the morning sky
By the Lion I conjure thee
To let the power pass from me

(use the banishing pentagrams and watch them dissolve into colored mist and fire.
H.Ps.pick up wand. All hold on to and hold aloft while chanting):

Now let the power pass from me
To end where it was begun
As I do will so mote it be
Chant the spell and be it done! (bring wand to floor on last word)

H.P.: All powers called and gathered here, fill us with your grace and wisdom ere you depart to your lovely realms. Help us understand the truth of our eternal life. The circle is open but unbroken. May the peace of the Goddess go in your hearts. Merry meet and merry part.

All: And merry meet again. BLESSED BE!

blessed be and happy trails

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Two Samhain Rituals

A Public Samhain Ritual

This ritual was originally written by a group of Compost Covenanters, directed by Jo Steen, and performed by a cast of dozens on a beach in San Francisco on Samhain night of 1980, and repeated at the site of the old Sutro mansion, high on a hill overlooking the ocean, on Samhain 1988. It was the last big public ritual Compost ever did, and was made notable by the sound (during one of the more solemn moments) of a voice exclaiming, "Holy Shit!!" This was the startled reaction of a group of teenagers who had come up to the site in order to drink, smoke a little weed, and do whatever else teenagers do on high windy hills on Halloween night. They very gamely hung around for the rest of the ritual, and we shared their beer afterward, having (we hoped) educated them a little about Witches.

Compost was indeed Holy Shit.....

PERSONNEL: Centering (male or female) High Priestess, Horned God, Death (male or female), Hekate, percussionist for gongs and rattle

CENTERING: Come now together. Join hands and share with us the understanding of death and rebirth; be as a tree which spreads its roots in the earth, and its branches to the heavens, standing witness to eternal transformation. For death is not a wall against which all thought and all consciousness must cease, but a door, a door to new life, to wonder, and to enchantment. ...Be still now and look within, with closed eyes.

Feel...feel. Feel the earth beneath your feet, feel the roots of your being re-connect with the earth, with the Mother. And as you do, your mind relaxes, your body relaxes, with each breath you take. Breathe deeply, gently, and imagine to yourself a leaf, full of life, as it fades and transforms, to fall and float gently downward, into a flowing stream. In your mind's eye of imagination, see it float effortlessly, down and down the stream of life....See it reach the sea, the vastness of infinity. See it sink gently beneath the waves, gradually releasing its form to become one with the infinite. Whence it came, thence it returns, to feed and nourish new forms, new life, new consciousness, Thus the cycle continues eternal, no thing truly lost, all things truly one. ...And now, open your eyes; feel the warmth, the love and the light of those around you. Let us now begin the ancient rite. Call ye now the powers of the Lord and the Lady, invoke the Force with ourselves and know that that which can be desired can be manifested. Call ye now and be reborn...

ALL: Io! Evohe!

(Purification of altar and preparation of saltwater by HPs)

H.Ps: (in appropriate direction with athame; priest/ess with saltwater and priest/ess with incense follow) Hail, Guardians of the Watchtowers of the East! Powers of Air, powers of the mind! Blow, cleansing winds; sweep away the dust and doubt. We invoke you and call you.

ALL: Come to us! Come to us! Come to us!

H.Ps: Hail, Guardians of the Watchtowers of the South! Powers of Fire, powers of the will! Flame forth, energizing power; burn away cowardice and conceit. We invoke you and call you.

ALL: Come to us! Come to us! Come to us!

H.Ps: Hail, Guardians of the Watchtowers of the West! Powers of Water, powers of the emotions! Flow, ccurrent of dreams; bring forth the hidden vision. We invoke you and call you.

ALL: Come to us! Come to us! Come to us!

H.Ps: Hail, Guardians of the Watchtowers of the North! Powers of Earth, powers of the body! Stand, Mother of mountains; give us your strength. We invoke you and call you.

ALL: Come to us! Come to us! Come to us!

H.Ps: As Above, So Below. The Circle is cast.

ALL:(ad lib) Seed-sower, grain reborn, Horned One, come.

HORNED GOD (enters circle) I am He.

ALL: Sun has set. Night has come.

H.G.: I am the Child of the Night. I am the Winter King.

ALL: Sun has set. Night has come.

H.G.: I am the vine and the harvest. I am the reaper of time.

ALL: Sun has set. Night has come.

H.G.: I am the stag and the hound. I am the dark rider on a white mare.

ALL: Sun has set. Night has come.

H.G.: I am the red river in the cornfield, I am a fallen oak in the grove.

ALL: Sun has set. Night has come.

H.G.: I am the raven's cry at midnight. I am a fearsome beast.

ALL: Sun has set. Night has come.

H.G.: I have torn down cities. I have raised up kings.

ALL: Sun has set. Night has come.

H.G.: I am my mother's son and my father's terror. I am a slain ram.

ALL: Sun has set. Night has come.

H.G.: I am the serpent in the tree. I am the keeper of the keys.

ALL: Sun has set. Night has come.

H.G.: I am purple-haired and two-faced. I am the guardian of the vault.

ALL: Sun has set. Night has come.

H.G.: I am the deliverer from care. I am a woeful countenance.

ALL: Sun has set. Night has come.

H.G.: I am the servant of the triple moon. I am a flaming wheel.

ALL: Sun has set. Night has come.

H.G.: I have danced and hunted. I have devoured my rival.

ALL: Sun has set. Night has come.

H.G.: All are mine as I am Hers. I am the feast in Her cauldron.

ALL: Moon is high (start soft and build)

H.G.: Pan

ALL: Moon is high

H.G.: Sabezios

ALL: Moon is high

H.G.: Dionysus

ALL: Moon is high

H.G.: Cronos

ALL: Moon is high

H.G.: Tammuz

ALL: Moon is high

H.G.: Adonis

ALL: Moon is high

H.G.: Osiris

ALL: Moon is high

H.G.: Shiva

ALL: Moon is high

H.G.: Arawn

ALL: Moon is high

H.G.: Dylan

ALL: Moon is high

H.G.: Arddhu the Dark One

(Pause. DEATH outside circle, draws the triangle and masks)

H. Ps.: Dark Hunter, Destroyer of Worlds, Breaker of Forms, great Alchemist, Transformer.

(RATTLE)

DEATH: (in triangle) I am the changer of form, I am the dark gateway. I am the breaking face of god. I am the deep waters dividing the sands. I am the crucible of life, power of death, gateway to rebirth. I am the shadow grave, the womb from whence all comes again to light. I will transform your rain of sorrow into rainbows of promise.

H.Ps: Death and birth are the children of life. In time we are born. In time we die. Life is immortal. As it was in the begining, is now and ever shall be. Blessed be.

ALL: Blessed be.

DEATH: Go into darkness...go into light...go without fury...go without fright...go with the coming...go with the going...here is the reaping...here is the sowing...

ALL: Go into darkness...go into light...go without fury...go without fright...go with the coming...go with the going...here is the reaping...here is the sowing...(ad lib until GONG)

(DEATH salts triangle, unmask, leaves mask in triangle and enters circle)

ALL (except H.Ps, H.G., DEATH, CENTERING): Flores para los muertos, flores para los muertos (repeat ad lib through next section)

HEKATE: Samhain, Halloween, All-Souls.

H.Ps, H.G., DEATH, CENTERING: Night of the Dead

HEKATE: The night death walks the streets and the dead wake.

H.Ps. et al: Day of the Dying

HEKATE: When the veils are thinnest between the worlds.

H.PS. et al: Lady of magick

HEKATE: When the gates open between the worlds.

ALL: (whispering) Triune Lady of Magick

HEKATE: I...Hekate

ALL: (ad lib) Hekate...e-ka-tay...ke-kay tay...hecuba...Kubaba...Kybele...

HEKATE: Hekate...Ke-ka-tay...e-ka-tey...I offer my magick to all those at the crossroads. To all those who dare to ask it, it is given.

ALL: It is given.

H.: To the brave

ALL: It is given.

H.: To the brave

ALL: It is given.

H.: Ask

ALL: It is given.

H.: Ask

ALL: It is given.

H.: Ask

ALL: It is given.

H.: To the great

ALL: It is given.

H.: To the small

ALL: It is given.

H.: To the rich

ALL: It is given.

H.: To the poor

ALL: It is given.

To the good /To the wicked /To the weak / To the strong (etc. ad lib)

CENTERING: Wind, water, earth and fire, bring me the boon that I desire!

ALL: Wind, water, earth and fire, bring me the boon that I desire! (repeat ad lib until GONG)

H.Ps.: Celebrate! (pass wine around circle) Drink! Let us prepare the harvest for this feast of all souls. (Pass cakes around circle) Eat! (pause while cakes and wine go around circle)

H.Ps: O Goddess of the Harvest

ALL: We call you forth

CENTERING: O Spirits of the Darkness and Light

ALL: We call you forth

H.Ps.: O Spirits of Freedom and Truth

ALL: We call you forth

CENTERING: O Spirits of the Warriors for Life

ALL: We call you forth

H.Ps: O Spirits of our ancestors

ALL: We call you forth

CENTERING: O God of Justice and Balance

ALL: We call you forth

H.Ps. and CENTERING. (chanted): Guide us in this time of darkness

H.Ps.: for the California condor

C.: For the bald eagle

H.Ps.: for the passenger pigeon

C.: for the timber wolf

H.Ps.: for the majestic buffalo

C.: for the humpbacked whale

H.Ps.: for the singing dolphin

C.: for the grizzly bear

H.Ps.: for the mountain lion

C.: for the tortured trees

H.Ps.: for the slaughtered tribes

ALL: We pause to remember (pause for thirteen heartbeats)

H.Ps. and CENTERING (chanted): Guide us in this time of darkness

H.Ps.: From the polluters of our planet

ALL: Let us deliver ourselves

C.: From the corruptions of world government

ALL: Let us deliver ourselves

H.Ps.: From the dishonesties of the power brokers

ALL: Let us deliver ourselves

C.: From the distortions of media manipulators

ALL: Let us deliver ourselves

H.Ps.: From the isms of intolerance

ALL: Let us deliver ourselves

C.: From wanton violence

ALL: Let us deliver ourselves

H.Ps.: From prolonged grieving

ALL: Let us deliver ourselves

C.: From anticipation of loss

ALL: Let us deliver ourselves

H.Ps.: From all ugliness of spirit

ALL: Let us deliver ourselves

H. Ps. and C.: In us do the dead live

Water flows downhill through us

The sun cools in our bones

We are joined with all living
In one shining web of energy
In us live the dead who made us
In us live the children unborn
Breathing each others' air
Drinking each others' water
Eating each others' flesh
We grow like a tree from the Earth.

(H.Ps. goes to center with wand. ALL begin wordless chant ad lib until peaked and drop called by H.Ps.)

H.Ps. (facing north with athame): All powers called and gathered here, fill us with your grace and wisdom ere you depart to your lovely realms. Help us understand the truth of our eternal life. The circle is open but unbroken. May the peace of the Goddess go in your hearts. Merry meet and merry part.

ALL: And merry meet again. BLESSED BE!

II. Closed Ritual with Dumb Supper:

Samhain Ritual as performed by Willow H.P., Valerie H.Ps., and various other Compost Coveners and friends

(Setup: regular altar in the North with usual implements; table and altar for the Dead in the West, divided by a veil to represent the veil between the worlds. On both sides of the veil, places are set up for the Dumb Supper; but living flowers decorate the living-world side, and dead ones, skulls, pieces of mirror, and pictures of the dead decorate the dead side. All flowers, dishes, and decorations are white, transparent, or mirrored. There are two point candles for the West, one on either side of the veil. On the veil sits a representation of Eleggua/ Legba/ Hermes, guardian and guide of the threshold. Ritual follows regular Full Moon Rite in purification of coveners and casting of circle.

Then H.P. offers the following toast):

To all the ancient ones from their houses, the Old Ones from above and below. In this time the Gods of the Earth touch our feet, bare upon the ground. Spirits of the Air whisper in our hair and chill our bodies, and from the dark portions watch and wait the Faery Folk that they may join the circle and leave their track upon the ground. It is the time of the waning year. Winter is upon us. The corn is golden in the winnow heaps. Rains will soon wash sleep into the life-bringing Earth. We are not without fear, we are not without sorrow...Before us are all the signs of Death: the ear of corn is no more green and life is not in it. The Earth is cold and no more will grasses spring jubilant. The Sun but glances upon his sister, the earth..... It is so....Even now....But here also are the signs of life, the eternal promise given to our people. In the death of the corn there is the seed-which is both food for the season of Death and the Beacon which will signal

green-growing time and life returning. In the cold of the Earth there is but sleep wherein She will awaken refreshed and renewed, her journey into the Dark Lands ended. And where the Sun journeys he gains new vigor and potency; that in the spring, his blessings shall come ever young!

H.P. (pours wine into the cauldron then drinks): Io! Evohe!

H.Ps. (holding wand and knife in God position): Dread Lord of the shadows, God of Life and Bringer of Death. Yet as the knowledge of thee is Death, open wide, I pray thee, thy gates through which all must pass. Let our dear ones who have gone before return this night to make merry with us. And when our time comes, as it must, O thou, the comforter and consoler, the giver of peace and rest, we will enter thy realm gladly and unafraid. For we know that when rested and refreshed among our dear ones, we will be reborn again. By thy grace and that of the Lady, let it be in the same place and time as our dear ones, that we may love again. O Horned One, descend we pray on (N---) thy High Priest and Witch.

(H.Ps. anoints H.P. with sacred oil)

H.Ps: I consecrate thee with oil. (anoint genitals)
I consecrate thee with wine. (anoint R foot)
I consecrate thee with water. (anoint L knee)
I consecrate thee with air. (anoint R knee)
I consecrate thee with fire. (anoint L foot)
I consecrate thee with power. (anoint genitals)

(H.Ps. holds horns over H.P. while all chant):

All: Dark Death, Bright Sun, Lord of Winds, Come!
(as power builds and peaks, H.Ps. places horns on H.P.'s head)

All: IO EVOHE! IO EVOHE! IO EVOHE!

H.P. (holding wand): IO HEKATE of the shining sky
Of the Earth and under
Dark Goddess of the broad roadways
Sorceress of the crossroads
You who walk by night, smoking torch in hand
Dark twin of day and lover of darkness
Who rejoices in the baying of hounds and spilt blood
We summon you, black-winged leader of souls
HEKATE HEKATE HEKATE
Ancient One, giver of terror and wisdom
Come down Goddess (H.P touches H.Ps. on forehead with wand)
Come up Goddess (touch on feet)
Come in Goddess (touch on heart chakra) to us.

H.Ps. (with hood pulled down so face is concealed): I am the terrible Mother, destroyer of men, slayer of men. No man hath ever seen me unveiled. I am the goddess of war and destruction. I bring the storm and the flood and the relentless fire consuming all in its raging path. I am clothed in the terrors of the night and I spare no mercy. I am this, all this. Beware of me. For I am that in you which is the black cat, the cold eye of the fish. I am that in you which is reptilian, clawed, fanged, hissing and howling at the moon. Beware of me. I am this, all this. And yet ye shall seek me out: for I am that in you which shrieks to be one, given only to the moment of desire, freed from restraints. For I am the Mother, the Vision-Maker, Giver of dreams and omens, Sharer of revelations and the understanding of all things. Enter ye who so desires, calling upon the Mother's name with celebration, and upon your lips ye will share my kiss. Enter ye who so desires the Mother in all her ways, for only then shall ye seek me out. I am the Mother, the Daughter, the Sister. I am the Gateway to all mystery...

All coveners chant: Hail Goddess, Queen of Night!
Hail Goddess, Queen of Light! (H.Ps throws hood back, takes moon horns from altar and crowns self)

THE DUMB SUPPER: (Without a sound and walking backward, approach the veiled shrine of the Dead in the West. Unveil the shrine, light a caandle. Burn incense and offer milk and honey. Mentally chant:)

By the mysteries of the Deep,
By the flames of Banal,
By the Power of the East,
By the Silence of the Night,
And by the holy rites of HEKATE
I call thee by the ties of love,
O spirit of (N---)
To break thy eternal fast with me
SO MOTE IT BE!

(Replenish incense, then go backward and silently to the feasting table, which is set on white cloth for you with quarter portions for each dead guest. You must not look at the places set for the dead. Eat the repast, and when finished walk backward to the shrine of the dead. Replenish incense and extinguish candles. Repeat deceased's name three times, then mentally chant the great necromantic charge):

Allay Fortission Fortissio Allynson Roa!

(Mentally welcome the deceased. Open your eyes slowly and see what you can see. Enjoy this melding of the mind with the dear departed. When the current slackens, chant out loud, but softly):

Your cord is cut, your eyes are shut

Go back to the Mother with Death as your lover
(Repeat and build to a peak. Drop and let the power be released on the winds to travel home with the dead)

LITANY OF SAMHAIN (As in previous ritual, from "O Goddess of the Harvest" to "We grow like a tree from the Earth")

(H.Ps. goes to center with wand. All begin wordless chant ad lib until peaked and drop called by H.Ps.)

H.Ps. (facing north with athame):
Lady of the shining castle
By the Bull I conjure thee
To let the power pass from me
(facing west) Lady of the flowering islands
By the Snakes I conjure thee
To let the power pass from me
(facing south) Lady of the fertile lands
By the Goat I conjure thee
To let the power pass from me
(facing east) Lady of the morning sky
By the Lion I conjure thee
To let the power pass from me

(use the banishing pentagrams and watch them dissolve into colored mist and fire.
H.Ps.pick up wand. All hold on to and hold aloft while chanting):

Now let the power pass from me
To end where it was begun
As I do will so mote it be
Chant the spell and be it done! (bring wand to floor on last word)

H.P.: All powers called and gathered here, fill us with your grace and wisdom ere you depart to your lovely realms. Help us understand the truth of our eternal life. The circle is open but unbroken. May the peace of the Goddess go in your hearts. Merry meet and merry part.

All: And merry meet again. BLESSED BE!

blessed be and happy trails

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<http://www.compostcoven.org/compost/yule.html>

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25 Apr 2001 - 5 Jan 2010

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About this capture

Yule Ritual

by Diana Walker

Significance & all that: YULE=IUL=WHEEL!!!

The Wheel continues to turn, ending another year. This festival heralds the beginning of Winter, but is a celebration also: the light RETURNS starting today, the sun gets closer & the days longer, nights shorter...a hint of the Spring to come...

The Myth, or one version of the many Yule myths around the world:

The Child of Light is born on this dark night, the Sun/Son, and the Lady is a mother to the coming year...The Dark surrounds us, but there's a light at the end of the tunnel. We're struggling and questing now, but it WILL pay off, surely as Spring follows Winter: the journey really does have its own rewards (that's the lesson of Winter), and our work & plans will materialize (the flowering of spring)...

Lucina is the Sun Goddess, the Goddess of Light. She is in the midst of Her Winter now, in the dark cave, the Underworld, on her quest. Her King-Lover is gone (sacrificed at the Mid-Summer Solstice), and She is searching through the furthest lands, even the land of the dead, to find Him and restore Him to life through Her love

...But as She journeys, She learns & grows strong and even confronts Death itself in Her quest for discovery. Finally, She triumphs over Death & darkness with the gift of life. She is pregnant by Her Lover, and this is what we celebrate today: the triumph, in the

end, of LIFE and LOVE. She gives birth to the Child of Light, who grows up to become the Lover; for She CONTAINS all and BRINGS FORTH all, even the One She loves. So it is each of us creates our worlds/lives/environments/destinies, through our lessons, struggles, self-discoveries and journeys of our own: when we're aware of LOVE. and bring love into our lives and works, we too are restored to full life, and triumph over the (sometimes necessary) darkness in ourselves. (pewh!)

Wreath-spell: This is a group-working, to bring strength to the Gang as an entity in itself, as well as ourselves. We weave stuff into the wreath--cloth or ribbon or yarn of colors significant to you, perhaps braided; written spells & prayers; drawings; objects; etc.-- while concentrating on the strength of the group & ourselves (we could chant, low and concentrated: an example:

"We die and are reborn
The Wheel is ever-turning"
or anything appropriate.)

The wreath is lots of things. It's us; it's our trophy for getting through this INSANE year; it's our symbol of our Journey, both as a group & every day; it's a symbol of our struggle to know ourselves & each other and what the Winter dark means to us: its deep inner work, its changes, its pride & strength & discarding what is not essential. It represents the diverse elements that make this ever-changing group what it "is", and the working toward the ideal level of perfect love and perfect trust, working toward trusting each other, confronting each other and making powerful magick together. The wreath represents us in our Winter, and will be burned at the Brigit-Candlemas festival (Feb. 2) to celebrate spring, fecundity, physical results materializing and a LAYING-DOWN of all this dark stuff! Today: be faithful, for there is not only a light at the end of the tunnel (being born today), but also a beautiful, full-blown SPRING after every winter. Today we celebrate HOPE, the birth of Hope; new ideas, new strength, and a "second wind"...

Mojo-spells: We can give these to friends or take them home to keep around, wear, carry, etc. While the wreath represents the trip we're on, and is a group-"trophy", the mojos are for protection & blessings on the way. They can be any form (check the supply box), and for any purpose. They can be for learning & getting as much out of this time as possible, or for integrating discoveries into your daily life; they can protect your health during the winter weather; they can be for love, creativity, money, discipline, friendship, or anything you think up. Perhaps you'd like to make one to bring Spring into your life a little early!

RITUAL: Cast circle as usual, keeping the point of the whole thing in mind...light the center candle. Invoke the Lady:

Welcome, Lucina, Welcome the Light!!
Slowly the circle completes again.
Dark Hekate turns and gives way
To the Light again!

Join hands and think about the Light for a minute; hum to raise energy. Become aware of the Light around us: the field of light we stand in, in our Sacred Space; the molecules of Light that we ARE; the mysteries of firelight, candle-lights. Give us a minute, then Invoke the Lord:

Friends, we are awake in the night.
Now we turn the wheel to bring the light.
We call the Sun from dead of night!
Welcome the newborn King!

Give us a minute, meditating on the birth of new Hope & Strength, the child of Light who will grow up to become a great Hero, be cut down as the Wheel turns, and be born again and again, just as all projects, people, and life on Earth are cyclical...

Do the Wreath-spell. If there are a lot of people we can pass it around, each contributing & speaking their thoughts & hopes; OR we can set it in the center and all work on it/charge it up. Put it on the altar when done--we'll save it for Brigit. Here we can either bless the cakes & wine, and work on our mojos while we celebrate, or if some of us feel it would dissipate energy, we can work on our mojos first.

Cakes & wine & pigging out as usual, end as usual, with a BIG HUG for all of us.

B.B.!!! and HO HO HO!! --DIANA

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<http://www.compostcoven.org/compost/brigid.html>

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About this capture

Brigid Ritual

freely adapted from various sources (thanx to Willow and Adam McLean)

(ALTAR SETUP: in center, bowl of earth with one large white taper; white candles for each person present lying nearby. Sage in mortar, matches and feather nearby. Salt, water in bowl. Goddess and God images. White flowers if possible.)

H.Ps. (Light point candles. Purify with salt water. Purify with burning sage. Cast circle.):
This is the night of Brigid, the Feast of the Waxing Light. Tonight the Goddess makes her annual transformation from Crone to Maiden, from Winter to Spring.

We celebrate the powers of Inspiration and Illumination, the growth of our own individuation with the growth of the light. In olden times this was the first celebration of Spring, the preparation for the germination and regrowth to come later. This was pictured through the myth of Bride and the Cailleach. The three months of winter from Samhain to Brigid were under the power and government of the Cailleach, the Old Woman Goddess, who embodies the forces of contraction and is the enemy of growth. Each year, on the Eve of Bride, as the first glimmer of dawn appears, the Cailleach drinks of the Well of Youth and is transformed into the fair young Goddess Bride. At the celebration of Brigid we celebrate the mystery of the germination of the seed after the cold contractive forces of winter, the Cailleach, are withdrawn, and the youthful energies of the Maiden aspect of the Goddess inspire and illuminate all life, physical and spiritual. Let us now invoke the Lady, by the names of Brigid, Bride, Brigidu, Brigantia

(CHANT)

(READ THE CHARGE OF THE GODDESS)

H.Ps.: Now let us invoke her Son, Brother and Lover, the God who was born again at the Winter Solstice and who grows in strength and beauty every day.

All CHANT: Seed sower, grain reborn, Horned One, come!

(H.Ps. faces South from North position. Call-and-response CHANT, with H.Ps. doing all the lines beginning with "Out of the..", and everyone else doing the responses):

H.Ps.: Out of the night

All: Before the beginning

Out of the dark

Before the light

Out of the cold

Before the warmth

Out of the womb

Before the birth
Out of the sleep
Before the waking
Out of the old
Before the new
Out of the silence
Before the sound
Out of the stillness
Before the shaking
Out of the illusion
Before the true
Out of the seed
Before the sprout
Out of the dawn
Before the day
Out of the echo
Before the shout
Out of the maze
Before the way

(H.Ps. travels deosil to S. point candle and lights taper. Holds high to N. and says):

H.Ps.: Fire of the Heart
(All repeat antiphonally)
Fire of the Mind
Fire of the Hearth
Fire of the Wind
Fire of the Art
Fire beyond Time

(explain chant and procedure to follow: All chant and dance if room):

"Wearing my longwing feathers as I fly
I circle around
I circle around
The boundaries of the earth."

(Go into free chanting, yelling, clapping, rattles, etc. Each person takes a taper and lights it from central cauldron taper. Place in earth, saying what they wish to grow in their life. Let cone of power peak when all have done this, then drop and ground it in cauldron.)

H.Ps.: Now let the power pass from me
To end where it was begun
Chant the spell and be it done
AS I DO WILL SO MOTE IT BE!

(Bless and share cakes and wine. Show and tell--any and all works of poetry, smithcraft, inspiration. Partying. Open circle. Group hug.)

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<http://www.compostcoven.org/compost/handfast.html>

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About this capture

A Handfasting

A Celebration of The Marriage of Valerie Walker and Ron Miller

originally celebrated on Winter Solstice 1977; renewed Dec. 20, 1987; renewed again Dec. 25, 1997

Valerie casts circle before guests arrive, leaving doors for them to enter. When all are assembled, they gather in a circle. Each guest is given a candle to hold. Ron and Valerie stand by a small table with a lit candle on it. She begins:)

V: East, South, West, North, Above, Below, Past & Future--they form the sphere of the Universe. We are, each one of us, at the center of that sphere. When two people marry, they meet at that center, and both are changed.

R: Let us share light around the circle.

(He lights the candle of the person to his right, while Valerie lights the candle of the person to her left. The light travels in both directions to meet at the other side of the circle.)

V: Today is the birthday of the sun, a good time for new beginnings. In some ways, what we do today is not new--it has been building for years. But today we announce and declare our marriage as an accomplished fact. Our marriage is not bondage.

R: We are bound to each other of our own free wills.

V: We love each other.

R: Our bond is formed by our love.

V: Each of us is an independent entity with an individual life to live.

R: Each fills needs for the other which are necessary for happiness & fulfillment in this life.

V: We form a union of two into one so that the two might become more complete in themselves.

R: We join our lives by choice.

V: We each face inward toward each other.

R: We also face outward toward the world.

V: Our parents and family, we ask your blessing on our union.

R: As you unite through us, we welcome you to our family.

V: Our friends, we ask your blessing on our union.

R: As you unite through us, we welcome you to our community.

We are here to make our solemn vows to each other, and you are here to bear witness to them.

V: I vow to you, in the presence of the Gods and of these friends, that I will be to you a loving and faithful wife and companion as long as I live. Symbolic of this vow, I give you this ring, round as the circle of time (places ring on his finger).

Wear it with my love, now and forever.

R: I vow to you in the presence of our family and friends that I will be to you a loving & faithful husband and companion as long as I live. Symbolic of this vow, I give you this ring, round as the circle of time (places ring on her finger).

Wear it with my love, now and forever.

We have declared ourselves to be husband and wife.

V: What the Gods have joined, let no man put asunder. SO MOTE IT BE.
East, South, West, North: the circle is open but unbroken. May the peace of the
Goddess go in your hearts. Merry Meet and Merry Part. BLESSED BE.

(Feasting and general rejoicing follows.)

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In full Witchy regalia and feeling my oats.

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[About this capture](#)

An Exorcism

and some incense recipes

(to be done upon moving into a new home; best done on a waning moon but effective anytime)

Ingredients: Salt water in a bowl; bay, myrtle, or rosemary; a bell.

Procedure: Consecrate the salt and water in your usual manner, but do not cast a circle. Go around the house widdershins (counterclockwise); ring the bell at each window and door.

Sprinkle salt water with the bay (myrtle, rosemary) three times in each corner and opening, going around widdershins, saying:

"Black spirits and white
Red spirits and grey,
come ye and come ye,
Come ye that may,
around and around,
Throughout and about,
The good keep in
And the ill stay out."

If you can, repeat this on the outside of the house.

Draw a waning moon in salt water at each corner and opening, going widdershins. Say,

"Three times round,
By the moon be bound."

Hang garlic on the front door and set a saucer of vinegar in each corner of the room in which you will sleep. Leave the vinegar overnight, and throw it into a running stream (down the toilet is fine) in the morning. Leave the garlic on the front door to protect against evil influences.

When you are finished with the exorcism, you may cast a circle deosil (clockwise), invoking the Gods, and do an additional working for protection--perhaps a mojo to hang at the entrance.

Incense for Exorcisms
Roman Catholic Blend
10 parts (p) frankincense
4 p benzoin
1 p storax

High Altar
5T frankincense

1T myrrh
1T aloeswood (beware of fakes)
2T sandalwood
1T benzoin
pinch of powdered quartz (optional)

Horned God
3T frankincense
1T pine needles
4 Bay laurel leaves
1/2 T juniper berries
1 leaf ivy (dried and crumbled)

Sun
4T frankincense
1T powdered chamomile
1/4T powdered cinnamon
pinch saffron
2 crumbled bay leaves
1T sandalwood
1/2 tsp wine
1 tsp honey

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<http://www.compostcoven.org/compost/richard.html>

29 captures

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About this capture

Rite for the Dying

[compiled from various sources by Valerie for the deathbed of Richard, a friend]
Point candles should surround the bed. Altar set up at SE side of bed so Richard can see.

Light point candles except for Center; light incense and leave it on the altar. Everyone stand in a circle around the bedside. HPs faces altar, takes three knifepoints of salt with the athame from the container of salt, and stirs them clockwise into the bowl of water, saying: "Salt and water, inner and outer, soul and body ..."

HPs shakes the water out over the altar three times, saying: "...be thou purified, be thou cleansed. Cast out all evils of the world of phantasm."

Salt water purification by drinking, leaving Richard till last. When it is his turn, HPs speaks the Three-Fold Blessing, as follows: (Jimmy [Richard's lover] touches each body part named with salt water.)

"Blessed be thy feet, which have brought thee in these ways,
Blessed be thy knees, that shall kneel at the sacred altar,
Blessed be thy hands, which have made beauty,
Blessed be thy lips, which will speak the sacred names,
Blessed be thy eyes, which have seen the wonders of life."

Everyone face East. HPs: (takes athame, taps three times on the wall or window in front of her, stands in invoking position with legs apart and arms wide, forming a five-pointed star with her body)

"Hail, Guardians of the Watchtowers of the EAST
Powers of AIR, Powers of the MIND:
We summon, stir, and call you up;
By the air that is Her Breath
Come to us, come to us, come to us!"
(everybody joins in on the "Come to us")

HPs uses athame to scribe a pentacle in the air, saying: "Blessed be!" (all repeat).

HPs takes bowl of salt water and sprinkles to the East, saying "With Water and Earth I purify the East. Blessed be." (all repeat).

HPs takes incense and waves it in a circle to the East, saying "With Fire and Air, I charge the East. Blessed be." (all repeat).

Repeat to the other directions. The invocations go as follows:

"Hail, Guardians of the Watchtowers of the SOUTH
Powers of FIRE, Powers of the WILL:
We summon, stir, and call you up;
By the fire that is Her energy
Come to us, come to us, come to us!"

"Hail, Guardians of the Watchtowers of the WEST
Powers of WATER Powers of the EMOTIONS:
We summon, stir, and call you up;
By the water that is Her blood
Come to us, come to us, come to us!"

"Hail, Guardians of the Watchtowers of the NORTH
Powers of EARTH, Powers of the BODY:
We summon, stir, and call you up;
By the earth that is Her body
Come to us, come to us, come to us!"

When the circuit is completed, the HPs turns to the East. Reaching up with the athame, then stooping to touch the ground, saying "As Above, So Below", HPs then turns to face the rest of the Circle and says: "The Circle is cast. The ritual is begun." HPs lights center candle and prepares for invocations of the gods.

Invocation (HPs):
"By love alone I may be known.
Love is the only law I know.
All things live and are my own:
from me they come, to me they go."

HPs: We gather here now to bid farewell to a friend who must travel far.
The blessings of the Goddess, of the God, of the Old Ones, and of good friends
Are with you as you travel beyond.

All: Death Chant as follows:

"Never the Spirit was born
The spirit shall cease to be never

Never was a time it was not
End and beginning our dreams
Birthless and deathless and changeless
Remains the spirit forever
Death has not touched it at all
Dead though the house of it seems."
(Repeat ad lib.)

Friends can now express their farewells ad lib.

HPs: "In western lands beneath the Sun
the flowers may rise in Spring,
the trees may bud, the waters run,
the merry finches sing.
Or there maybe 'tis cloudless night
and swaying beeches bear
The Elven-stars as jewels white
amid their branching hair.

Though here at journey's end I lie
in darkness buried deep,
beyond all towers strong and high,
beyond all mountains steep,
above all shadows rides the Sun
and stars forever dwell:
I will not say the Day is done,
nor bid the Stars farewell."*

Silence for a few moments.

HPs: There is a reason for being here in this world and this life.
There is a reason for leaving, when the purposes of this life are done.
As the evergreen grows and prospers both in summer and in winter, year after year,
So also does the soul continue from life to life to life...
Growing ever stronger, wiser, and richer.

All: May the servants of the gods escort you with honor to their own land of light, of
beauty, and of joy.

HPs: Blessed Be!

All: Blessed Be!

HPs: Lady and Lord, we thank you for being with us. Remain with Richard through his
time here on this earth, and through his transition into your lovely realms. Blessed Be!

All: Blessed Be!

HPs: Guardians of the Watchtowers, we thank you for being with us. Remain with Richard through his time here on this earth, and through his transition into your lovely realms. Blessed Be!

All: Blessed Be!

HPs: The circle is open, but unbroken. May the Peace of the Goddess go in our hearts. Merry Meet, and Merry Part.

All: And Merry Meet again!

HPs: Blessed Be!

All: Blessed Be!

*This is from J.R.R. Tolkien's Lord of the Rings trilogy, part 3, The Return of the King. I am not sure of the origin of the other chants. It really did the trick for Richard, and for Jimmy...

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<http://www.compostcoven.org/compost/mojo.html>

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[About this capture](#)

Making a Mojo

A Mojo is a visible symbol of desire. It is a spell, tangible Magick (spelled with a "k" to distinguish it from stage magic, or sleight-of-hand). A mojo is the not-too-distant relative of the four-leaf clover, rabbit's foot, wedding ring, flag, and many other modern Magickal symbols. Usually constructed in the form of a charm-bag, a mojo is carried on the person or hung in the home, car, or workplace for good luck, protection, harmony, health, attracting love or money, and so on.

Mojos contain many different things--herbs, coins, magnets, stones, bones, beads, feathers, hair, shells-- depending on the purpose. Every part of a mojo has significance symbolically: colors, numbers of knots, shape, number and kinds of ingredients. The symbolic meanings have been part of esoteric knowledge for millennia, and are the basis of many systems of Magick, such as the Freudian and Jungian. All the parts work together to affect the unconscious mind and get it moving in order to achieve the desired result-- somewhat like waving a red flag in front of a bull, or burning an American flag in front of a US senator. Because, let's face it, the unconscious, powerful though it is, is not too cooperative in achieving conscious desires.

Making and using a mojo is a way of making our deepest wishes solid and tangible, of working things out on the physical level and then taking them back into ourselves. It's all done with symbols, because the unconscious understands symbols. You might say that Mojo Magick is the mirror-image of dreaming, in that dreams are messages from the unconscious to the conscious mind, and Mojo Magick is sending messages back.

Mojo Magick is based on the principles of Similarity (things which seem alike are alike) and Contagion (things once in contact continue to interact after separation).

The Law of Similarity is the basis of the system of Magickal Correspondences; each area of life is ruled by a particular planet, day of the week, etc., and each of these planets rules a number of substances, plants, animals, etc. For example, the area of sex and love is traditionally ruled by the planet Venus, whose day is Friday, whose color is blue-green, whose metal is copper, and whose herbs are (among many others) rose, orris, and sandalwood. If you wished to make a love charm, then, you would pick out herbs sacred to the Goddess in her Venusian aspects, with perhaps a magnet (for attraction), or a copper penny, and place them in a small bag of blue-green cloth.

Along with these ingredients, you would also put in some object belonging to the one you desired--a lock of hair, a fragment of an old shirt, or the like. This obeys the Law of Contagion--you are providing an object link, a physical connection with your subject. A photograph is an excellent object link, especially if the subject's name is written on the back.

Other sorts of spells can be concocted in the same manner by referring to the Tables of Correspondence and deciding what sort of energy you wish to deal with. Each part of the mojo is symbolic, including the number of ingredients and the number of knots used

to bind it--use the number which symbolizes your purpose.

It is most important to be clear in your mind what your purpose actually is, and to do only one kind of working at a time. Since the mojo functions on both the magickal and psychological levels as a centering device, you don't want to confuse yourself before you begin. And Magick generally works, so be prepared to get exactly what you ask for, and ask carefully.

When you have constructed the mojo (preferably on the day appropriate to your purpose, on a waxing moon for growth and increase and on a waning moon for decrease and getting rid of things you don't want in your life), charge it with your personal power by breathing on it and saying something like:

"I charge this spell
By three times three
To do harm to none
Nor return to me
As I do will SO MOTE IT BE!"

Upon uttering the last words, project the power of your desire into the mojo. Visualize, as strongly as you can, your purpose accomplished and yourself in the situation you want. Let this energy go into the mojo; and relax. Carry it with you, or present it to the one it is meant for.

Then keep your eyes open for opportunities to make your wish come true. They will appear--you have only to see them.

Blessed Be!

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<http://www.compostcoven.org/compost/pathwork.html>

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About this capture

Pathworking

Assume a comfortable position, either seated or lying down. Breathe deeply from the solar plexus, and tell yourself, "my toes are relaxing and my fingers are relaxing. My ankles are relaxing and my wrists are relaxing. Completely relaxed, flowing like water."

Continue this process over your entire body, feeling the relaxation creep up over you. When you are completely relaxed, go on to the next step, the Spiral Staircase.

Envision a spiral staircase which you are to descend, spiraling down, deeper and deeper, past the number One. In your mind's eye, SEE that number one. Spiral down, deeper and deeper, past the number Two. And so on, all the way down to number Ten and the bottom of the staircase. You are now in trance, conscious of both the outside world and the inner one, but detaching your attention from the outside world and paying attention to the inner.

When you reach the bottom of the spiral staircase, envision a door. Go to this door, open it, and walk through, shutting it behind you. You are now in your Safe Space.

The Safe Space is that place in your mind where you start your explorations; it is a terminal from which to voyage out in many different directions, a library for you to look up information carried in your subconscious mind, an inner temple for you to perform your own private rituals, a storehouse, a laboratory, a control room, a place which cannot be invaded, where nothing bad can happen to you, where you do your most important work, which is yours alone. You may wish to spend a lot of time in this place, furnishing and exploring; perhaps reenacting dreams or scenes from your life (the more threatening ones can be run on a TV monitor and changed to the way you want them), or any of the myriad private things you do alone. But in pathworking you make doors in this room which lead to many different realities.

To begin your explorations, make a door in the wall to the East, in the form of a pentacle of blue flame which is big enough to step through. Step through it. Greet the East, and set out to explore the element of Air, the element of the Mind. Stay as long as you like, and when you meet entities out there, ask their names. Bring something back with you to place on the altar in your Safe Space. When you come back, thank the East, step through the pentacle of blue flame and cause it to vanish. Then thank your Safe Space for being there and bid it farewell, knowing that you may return any time you wish, and that the gift you got from the East is there waiting for you.

Return up the spiral staircase, becoming more awake and more aware with each step, spiraling upward past the numbers from Ten to One. When you reach One, open your eyes, feeling perfectly refreshed and renewed and ready to share the experiences of your pathworking with the others present, if any. If you are planning to do many pathworkings, especially alone, it might be useful to make a taped trance-induction, with the addition of some soothing music. This is especially useful if the issue of control is a big one for you--it is better to go into trance under the sound of your own voice than another's.

Do a pathworking on each of the four directions in turn, East, South, West, and North. Then you will be familiar enough with the Powers of each direction that you will know to whom you are talking when you invoke the Guardians; in addition, as you bring back gifts from each trip to your Safe Space, you will simultaneously be constructing your inner temple.

The pathworking on the Center will put you in tune with the forces of Transformation, and should be followed by pathworkings on the Goddess and the God. It is quite feasible to do one pathworking for each, but I find it more effective to divide the Goddess into Maiden, Mother, and Crone aspects, and the God into the Light God of the Sun and the Dark God of the Midnight Sun.

After these ten pathworkings have been completed, you may wish to seek your own personal totem animals and/or spirit guides, to find your witchname, to solve particular problems that have been bothering you, to interpret dreams, or just to explore the worlds in search of enlightenment and inspirations. You can go anywhere in time and space, from Elfland and Tir-nan-og to the depths of your own fears. Just remember to come back up the staircase as slowly and gradually as you went down.

Bon voyage, and Blessed be!

(Parenthetical note: I recently received an e-mail from someone who claims to own the term "pathworking" and told me to stop using it. Excuuuuuse me, but Witches have been using that term for a long time now, and I personally have used it in the sense described above for over twenty years. And I intend to go on doing so, despite any flak from johnny-come-latelies who have decided that the Craft is a nice way to earn a living. Public domain, folks...)

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<http://www.compostcoven.org/cnl/johex.html>

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About this capture

Jo's Hex spells

PDFs to Download and Color

These Hex Spells were partly created by and partly gathered from traditional hex materials by Jo Steen. It was Jo's dream to found the Hecate Homeland, a place where a shrine to the goddess Hecate could live, and where Witches could retire to the Hecate Home for Harried Hags to spend a pleasant old age rocking and cackling together on the front porch. Unfortunately, this dream didn't materialize for Jo. She died in Seattle, far from her fellow Composters. But while in San Francisco, Jo accomplished a lot. In 1980 Jo commissioned sculptor Medea Maquis to make a shrine to the Triple Goddess Hecate, and that shrine is now resident in land belonging to Witches in the Northwest. (Here's the full story.)

Over many years, she taught Magickal techniques to her students: I remember going over to her house to make candles with Magickal intent, and how she would tell us that anything you do can be magickal -- it's all in the intent. She was particularly fond of the process of coloring hex spells with intent. For years she collected traditional Pennsylvania Dutch hex signs, and added to the resource with African symbols and medieval talismans. Once she had accumulated the designs, she had them printed out on sheets of paper with instructions for coloring them. She sold sets at street fairs and by mail, with the money going to benefit the Hecate Shrine Land Fund.

How to Use the Hex Spells:

Download and print out the spell you want. Using the correspondences on four and seven, choose appropriate colors for your intention. Always work deosil (clockwise) for increase, and widdershins (counterclockwise) for decrease of whatever it is you wish. Be very concentrated on your intent the entire time you are coloring the spell--it's a meditative device, like the Asian yantra, but it's also interactive, engaging both body and mind. Stay within the lines as precisely as you possibly can -- neatness counts!

The spells for Insight/Inspiration/ Creativity and Rapid Progress need one other step: the insight, progress, etc., is toward some particular end, so you will have to download and print out the minihexen, each of which should fit right in the middle or the larger spell, so you are asking for rapid progress in the affairs of making things manifest (a good money spell) or rapid progress in matters of health, and so on.

When you're done you can hang them on your wall, laminate them into a plate, have them copied as a tee shirt or mouse pad, carried with you as a good-luck charm....or give them to someone to whom you wish well. You could also use the patterns for embroidery or cross-stitch (which takes a lot longer and needs a lot more intent, so the spell would be a lot stronger), to decorate a birthday cake, to knit a sweater, as a tattoo design -- whatever your heart desires and your hands are good at.

The Hecate Shrine
The Hecate Shrine

Jo Steen, 1930-1996
Jo Steen, 1930-1996

The Hex Spells:

[Quotes are from Jo's printed set of Hex Spells]

1.) Abundance:

this is for abundance in any area you might need, not merely the physical.

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2.) Growth:

this one can also be used with the minihexen for growth in particular areas. Be very sure to ALWAYS do this one deosil, from the center out in a growth spiral. Jo says: "Growth (in whatever you desire) The Double Growth Spiral. color in the spiral figure, working in a clockwise direction, and you will complete your GROWTH."

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3.) Insight, Inspiration and Creativity:

one of Jo's favorites. Use it with the minihexen to gain insight into whatever area of your life needs it. Jo says: "The Rain that Refreshes the soul Insight-Inspiration-Creativity. A

Green-working spell. The rain of INSPIRATION drops thru the Rainbow of PROMISE to water the EARTH-STAR. The Earth-Star, CENTERED with the Earth-Star-flower is always turning, alternating night/day, light/heavy, etc. Work in a clockwise direction for increase of insight, inspiration, and CREATIVITY."

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4.) Joy:

pretty obvious...use nice bright full-spectrum colors for this one. Jo says: "This is the Earth-Star-flower arranged to bring Joy and Happiness. Clear Yellow radiating Light is the beginning. Add contrast and definition with the rich, deep tones of the earth in which you find joy."

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5.) Time of the Lilies:

to bring peace and calm among people. Jo says: "The Time of the Lilies. Trace & colour carefully in Purple for Nobility. This is a spell to bring the time of Righteousness & Peace and Love among all creatures living as Sisters & Brothers. Draw it often."

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6.) Lucky In Love:

give your romance a little jump-start.

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7.) Manifestation:

as above, so below--making that which is desired present in the world. Very powerful. Jo says: " Creation-manifestation and materialization. "as below, so above".

Above/below, Within/without, encircled by the Lemniscate, the eternity binding all life; flanked by Earth-Star symbols, asking for joy in all good things of earth. This is a symbolic representation of the most basic principle of sympathetic magic."

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8.) Rapid Progress:

remember, rapid progress with no particular aim is merely spinning your wheels. Jo says: " The Whirling Star-Rapid progress. Let any of the smaller symbols be placed in the centre of the Star for rapid, well-advised progress, manifesting change in the direction so displayed."

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9.) Serenity:

inner and outer. Jo says: "The Great & 7 Lesser Seals of Serenity. Drawn in blue for the watchful, protective serenity of the completed creation. Colour this spell in seven parts, or seven stages or even seven days, perhaps: as you will, so mote it be. Study the meaning of the leaves."

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10.) Travel Safely:

an old talisman from the Middle Ages. Carry with you when traveling.
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11.) True Love:
to find the one you will stay with.
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12.) Undo Your Mistakes:
a particular favorite of Jo's. You can ALWAYS undo your mistakes. Jo says: "Have Faith! You can always undo your mistakes. 3 in one spell. 2 parts African. 1 part HEX. Will make your home secure, fill your heart with faith, and give you courage to try again."
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13.) Mini-Hex spells to use in the center of IIC or Rapid Progress:
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Pete Pathfinder of the Aquarian Tabernacle Church writes:

Have you looked lately at our web page and seen the college catalog from our Woolston-STEEN Theological Seminary, a Washington state Dept of Higher Education Coordinating Board Degree Authorization Agency-approved Wiccan seminary, granting academic degrees from Assoc. Min. thru D. Min.? It is named in honor of Jo and Patricia Woolston, another Canadian priestess and teacher now passed over. I'd like to hear your comments on this. We presently have 28 students enrolled in their 3rd yr of a 4 yr bachelor program, another first for Wicca in the known universe, I fear.

<http://www.compostcoven.org/cnl/johex.html>

35 captures

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[About this capture](#)

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23 Apr 2001 - 28 Dec 2009

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<http://www.compostcoven.org/compost/scrying.html>

29 captures

1 May 2001 - 31 Dec 2009

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About this capture

Scrying and Divination

SCRYING:

Scrying (crystal-gazing) is best done at the dark of the moon, and a crystal ball or magick mirror is definitely a tool of Crone-wisdom. If you wish to make a magick mirror, you will need: a curved (lens-shaped) piece of glass, black paint, and a box to set the mirror in. Simply paint the convex side of the glass with two coats of black enamel paint and set it in the box. A piece of wood hollowed out to fit the mirror would be even better, as you will be able to glue the mirror to it.

To consecrate a crystal ball (show-stone) or magick mirror, you will need: salt, water, wormwood (for incense) Purify the stine or mirror with salt water, and charge in the smoke of burning wormwood, saying: "Blessed be thou, focus of power. may I see that within you which will lead me in the paths of the Lady and bring me to her Wisdom. As I do will, so mote it be."

This should be a solitary rite. Keep your show-stone or mirror on your altar, but cover it up when not in use with a silk cloth.

TO USE THE CRYSTAL/MIRROR:

Dim the lights. Cast the circle. Have someone act as your recorder, to write down what you say. Don't let light fall directly on the stone or mirror, but have enough light in the room so that you can see something in it. Gaze intently at one point in the stone or mirror, but let your attention cover the whole area of the stone or mirror. You may see things happening to the side of your focus point. If so, try not to shift your vision, but keep your eyes glued to the focus point. DO NOT shift your attention. This takes time and patience. Try not to intepret while you are scrying. If something doesn't make sense, let it be. Describe the visions out loud, so the recorder can write them down; you will not remember most of them, since you have put yourself into a light trance. If you are alone, you can use a tape recorder. When the visions seem to haze over and the glass returns to its normal state, you may relax and turn the lighting up again.

READING THE CARDS:

There are many different kinds of Tarot decks available, from the rather chilly but elegant Aquarian deck to the feminist deck of round cards, Motherpeace. You will have to choose the deck you will work with regularly by a process of trial and error. Does this deck go with your personality and personal style? Do you feel comfortable with the pictures? Do you feel that this deck is easy for you to interpret? My personal favorite is one which Starhawk always referred to as "that hippie deck"; it's the Morgan's Tarot, originally published in Boulder Creek, CA, in 1970. It has no suits, no Major and Minor Arcana, no standard interpretations. It did come with a booklet, but I lost that a long time ago. I have used this deck for over twenty-five years, and am still discovering new things in it.

If you'd like to see a non-standard deck for divination which I created recently, check out the Vee-Deck--it might give you some ideas for a deck of your own. The Vee-Deck is filled with pictures of people in my life, some of whom can be recognized as Composters or Toads if you look carefully. There's a lot of Feri influence in the deck, as well as a fair amount of stuf from the Inner Journey seminars. Enjoy!

You can do divinations with a plain pack of playing cards, if you like; you will have no Major Arcana, but the suits are equivalent to the Tarot suits: Spades are Swords, Clubs and Wands, Hearts are Cups, and Diamonds are Pentacles. And there are plenty of messages in the Minor Arcana to make an ordinary deck of value. (Besides, when you get bored, you can play solitaire.) Consecrate your cards as you would your crystal, and keep them in a silk cloth. Don't let them touch the ground; always use the silk cloth under them. And don't let just anyone handle them. If you are doing a reading for someone, allow them to cut the cards, but that's it.

HOW TO READ CARDS:

Shuffle the deck, cut it into three piles with the left hand, away from you, and replace the piles in a different order. You can either just pull individual cards at random from the deck in answer to individual questions, or do a layout. My favorite layout is the Celtic Cross:

1. (in the middle) This card represents the situation.
2. (laid crosswise over the first) This card represents what crosses you, for good or evil.
3. (above the first two) This card represents your conscious thoughts in the matter.
4. (below them) This card represents your unconscious thoughts in the matter.
- 5.(to their left) This card represents the past or the influences which are just now passing away.

6.(to their right) This card represents the future or the influences which are just now coming into being.

7. (further to the right, at the bottom) This card represents you.

8. (above the previous card) This card represents your environment.

9. (above the previous card) This card represents your hopes and fears in the matter.

10. (above the previous card) This card represents the final outcome, and exerts its influence over all the other cards.

Interpreting cards is much like interpreting the things you see when scrying--use your intuition. What does the picture on the card say to you? Are there any recurring visual elements from card to card which might show an overall theme? In which positions? If you are using a deck with standard interpretations, try not to be swayed by them. Go with what your gut tells you about this layout, even though it might not be according to the book. If you're reading for someone else, don't make interpretations until all the cards are laid out. Get all the data before coming to a conclusion. Try to elicit information from the person being read: this is not mere fortune-telling, it is an attempt to see what the gods have to say. It is perfectly legitimate to say "I don't know what this means. Does it say anything to you?"

The best way to learn the cards is to do readings for yourself, and do a lot of them. You develop personal associations with the cards--they become your friends.

Attention Mac users: I have put together a HyperCard stack which will give a random reading of ten cards in the Morgan deck, plus one extra for additional insight. If anyone would like a copy, please e-mail me at valeriewalker_99@yahoo.com and I'll send it to you. You can use it with your own deck if you like--just scan in your own cards.

RUNESTONES:

There are sets of runestones on sale which come with books of interpretation; or you can get a book on runelore, and make your own runes of wood or clay. Consecrate them as you would any other tool of divination, and keep them wrapped in a silk cloth.

OTHER FORMS OF DIVINATION:

The I Ching is an ancient Chinese book of divination which can be used with three coins: there are complete instructions in the book. The best translation is the Wilhelm-Baynes, published by Bollingen.

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<http://www.wiggage.com/shrine/josteen.html>

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In Memoriam--
Jo Steen

In Memoriam--
Jo Steen
by Pete Pathfinder Davis,
reprinted from PANEGYRIA

Samh'ain again, as the wheel continues on relentlessly turning. It is with a mixture of sadness and joy that I learned a few days ago of the October 21st passing over of Mother Moth, otherwise known as Jo Steen, a founding member of Starhawk's Compost Coven in San Francisco many years ago, and a very dear friend and mentor. Jo had gone to SF from Seattle years ago, and ultimately returned here to live. I have sadness at the loss of a dear friend, committed Wiccan priestess and maker of magic; joy at her release from suffering and her passage to the Summerland. I know if she returns to this time and place again, we will recognize her from her boundless enthusiasm and energy. To me, she has always epitomized the goddess Hecate in Her crone aspect

While in California, Jo had commissioned and paid for for the creation of The Hecate Shrine, a beautiful work of fine art from the hand of sculptor Medea Maquis depicting Hecate as three women seated on a stone, each holding two torches. I'm not certain of the origins of the sculpture beyond the fact that Jo designed and sketched the overall concept and the housing containing it, but it has always been pretty clear to me that the three faces of Hecate were those of Jo Steen, Starhawk, and Medea Maquis.

It was Jo's original intent to honor the goddess Hecate Triformis, with a shrine to be used as a focus to raise the money for a permanent piece of land where Pagans could gather. After a short while, the idea sort of died after raising only about \$400 in total, and she took the shrine back to Seattle with her when she returned. It then was passed from Pagan family to Pagan family, with no permanent resting place.

Back in 1985, Jo came here to the Tabernacle to our first Solitary Convention. She told

me that she was impressed with the fact that we had already accomplished what they had tried unsuccessfully to do, and asked us if we would accept her gift of the Hecate Shrine, and maintain it here on our land. Naturally, we accepted.

In the intervening years Jo became increasingly ill with emphysema, and became tethered to an oxygen tank in her apartment in Seattle. At first, she came to Spring Mysteries a few times, but ultimately had to remain closer to home as her oxygen need became more serious. She remained in her apartment until about a week or so before she passed over.

This coming spring, the Hecate Shrine will finally be placed in its own shrine building, on the hill behind the Tabernacle right next to the stone circle where Jo has worshiped with us on more than one occasion. The building is being refurbished with a new floor and carpeting, and will be dedicated as a no-shoes meditation area, with the Hecate Shrine situated centrally in the large room. I wish we had been able to manifest Jo's dream for a separate building to house the shrine a little sooner, but I know she will be at the dedication this spring, even if we can't see her.

Merry meet, and merry part, Jo Steen, and merry meel again! Your corporeal presence may be gone from us for now, but your spirit, enthusiasm and dedication to the Craft lives on in the hearts of all of us whose lives you touched and changed."She changes everything She touches, and...everything She touches, changes!"

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FOR JO STEEN (1930-1996)

Where three roads meet i will find you
where three roads meet is your crossroads -- the Herme marks the spot
with a pile of stones is the Triskelion a three-legged race
endlessly around a full moon-face big enough for everyone to fit in
where crows dawdle & cackle & caw

diminutive all of-a-piece a shoal of dark shrugging wings
intense overbearing informative a story to tell you must listen to the very end of
intrusive suggestive fraught with your own peculiar wisdom
your own lived-in life a very narrow path indeed yet full of friends & family
bohemian gypsy commissioning new religious art & peddling yr hocus-pocus
fanning yourself with Tarot cards covening the foundation of the wiccan revival

Mother Moth come to rest & at roost among witches & familiars
pestering roistering gadfly-dragon
Mother Moth the Crone alone no longer adrift in an air too thin for her to grasp

Mother Moth her wings unsinged around the flame of a lamp
at the foot of Hekate's statue

Magna Mater little flea Leukothea Anthracite Isis
the Crow seeing her reflection pluriform & multifaceted
shellacked & shiny in a dragonfly's eye:
diminutive madonna-haired Jo Steen

the Crow... the Crone the Crone...the Crow the Crow...the Crone
. . . the CROWN

Mothermoth/triskelion.... 3 leaves left on a barren tree
3 stones left standing inside a circle cut into the earth long ago with a stick
where black crows shrug & lift their heads & nod & flap their shawls
Where 3 roads meet in the kingdom of hades & persephone
i will find you at a clear spring by a white cypress where the good waters of memory
fountain & bubble & never stop.

-- Frank Donnola, 12/96

THE PAINTER IN THE COURTYARD for Jo Steen

The painter
holds his breath,
covers
a terrace wall
-- 12 strokes. He blows

a lung full
of cigarette
smoke
against
the

wall, dips his brush

& slaps white paint
across a doorway.
Now he turns a corner
-- he's gone.

Just then
the morning
is over.

Lunchtime!

In two hours the courtyard
has changed from brown
to

white.

Now the air fills
with

intense, green

birds.

by Tony Vaughan
<http://www.compostcoven.org/cnl/diane.html>

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About this capture

Notes from Diane's Garden
Or The Curious Lore and Magical Property of Plants
By Diane Fenster
reprinted from the Compost NewsLetter

Contents:

- April 1987: Roses
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- October 1987: Apple/Pumpkin/the Day of the Dead
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- December 1987: Holly/Ivy/Mistletoe
- January 1988: Periwinkle/Cowslip/ Primrose/Violet)
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- Samhain 1988: Flying Ointments/Hemlock
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Diane's work can be viewed at:

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Diane
The Prime Mover of the Universe

<http://www.compostcoven.org/cnl/diane.html>

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Diane
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About this capture

Notes from Diane's Garden
Or The Curious Lore and Magical Property of Plants
By Diane Fenster
April, 1987: Roses

Let's set the record straight right from the beginning. I'm a Garden Crazy, a Kitchen Witch and a tad unconventional in my methods, but I seem to have gathered some bits and pieces of ancient and not so ancient wisdom in the four years I've called myself a gardener. Since I'm a solitary and I have a terrible memory, I thought it time to start distributing some information for anyone who'd care to dabble in Magick, sorcery, Witchcraft, or cooking using plants... Gardening is a great source of inspiration to my Magickal workings and to my deeper understanding of Witchcraft and myself. It's got everything-life, death, rebirth... a microcosm of the macrocosm, etc. Erich Neumann puts this symbolism together very well in the chapter on The Lady of the Plants in The Great Mother. I think it's important for even you city Witches to try and become familiar with the Demeter aspect of the Goddess, even if it's with a few pots of herbs in your window.

But enough of that. On to the topic-Roses. Last year I planted 23 rose bushes at Mt. Bubba (my home in Pacifica); this year I'll put in 9 more. I clearly love roses and I'm attempting to grow them in an oceanside climate which is normally too damp for the genus Rosa. But they are the essence of all that is Magickal to me, so I'll keep trying to grow them.

Assorted thoughts on the Rose in no particular order:

- The symbol for the Great Mother as Madonna or Virgin is the rose. The rose is also a symbol for Aphrodite, Astarte, Ishtar, and Venus. So we have a contrast between the inward, enclosed or cloistered virginal white rose and the full-blown sensuality of the red rose. You may say it's another attempt on the part of early Christians to suppress a Goddess image by using the symbol for the Virgin Mary, but in this case I suspect that both images are correct. Also, roses were frequently buried with the dead, carved on tombstones and planted on graves. So you often find old rose collectors sneaking around graveyards looking for an unusual specimen to take a cutting. Most of the ladies I've met who are involved with roses are Witches even if they don't know it. This would

indicate the rose to be a symbol for Hecate or The Morrigan (Morgan le Fay). All this means that roses, being symbolic representations of the Triune Goddess, can be used in spells in lots of ways. White roses for purification of self or sacred space (Virgin); red roses obviously in love spells, but that can be taken further to include fertility -- the Goddess as source of all life (Mother). Since roses do have a connection with death, very dark wine-colored roses would be appropriate in a ritual to remember the dead or perhaps for some type of banishment spell (Crone). For some more symbolic connections, please refer to Barbara Walker's listing on roses in the Women's Encyclopedia of Myths and Secrets.

- There are at least 150 species of roses from which have come all of the roses grown today. Roses were cultivated as early as the 12th century BC by the Medes and the Persians.
- Rose hips or the fruit of the rose are a major source of Vitamin C, and therefore the rose is acclaimed for its power to prevent disease.
- It was a custom in ancient Rome to suspend a rose over the dinner table as a symbol that all confidences spoken there were to be held sacred, hence *sub rosa*.
- *Rosa gallica* is the official Apothecary Rose. Rose preparations were used in medieval times to treat a great number of ailments: to strengthen the heart, liver and stomach, prevent vomiting, relieving fevers and headaches. (Try using a compress of rose water to help a headache).
- Persians connect the rose with the nightingale. Tradition says that the bird cries whenever a flower is picked and that it will hover around a rosebush in springtime until it is overpowered by the sweet fragrance and falls senseless to the ground.
- The red rose is said to have gotten its color from the blood of Adonis.
- The rose is regarded to be under the special protection of elves, dwarves, and fairies who are ruled by Laurin, the lord of the Rose Garden.
- In Germany, a woman who had several lovers used rose leaves to divine which one will be true. She would name each leaf after a lover and toss them in the water. The last to sink was the one to count on.
- In keeping with the Doctrine of Signatures, the red rose is used in an old charm against nosebleeds (red cures red). It goes "Abek, Wabek, Tabek; in Christ's garden stand three red roses-one for the good God, the other for God's blood, the third for the angel Gabriel; blood I pray you cease to flow."
- In the War of the Roses, the white rose was the symbol of the house of York, the red the house of Lancaster.

- If a white rosebush unexpectedly bursts into bloom, it is a sign of death in the nearest house.

I hope that some of the above information will prove useful in your Magickal workings. What follows are a few delightful oldtime rose recipes:

Rose-Petal Sandwiches

Put a layer of red rose-petals in the bottom of a jar or covered dish. Put in 4 oz. of fresh butter wrapped in waxed paper. Cover with a thick layer of rose-petals. Cover closely and leave in a cool place overnight. The more fragrant the roses, the finer the flavour imparted. Cut bread in thin strips or circles, spread each with the perfumed butter and place several petals from fresh red roses between the slices, allowing edges to show. Violets or clover blossoms may be used in place of roses.

Pot-Pourri Recipe Used by Eleanour Sinclair Rohde

To a large bason of dried sweetscented rose petals allow a handful of dried lavender flowers, rosemary, thyme, balm, sweet marjoram, southernwood, sweet basil, clove carnations, sweet briarleaves, wild thyme, garden thyme, hyssop, philadelphus flowers, orange flowers, mint, sweet geranium leaves, verbenas, a few bruised cloves, the dried and powdered rind of a lemon or orange, a teaspoonful of allspice, half an ounce of cinnamon and a good pinch of sandalwood.

Gather and dry the flowers and leaves all through the season, adding any others according to one's fancy but keeping the proportion of a bason of rose petals to a large handful of all the other ingredients put together. Store in a jar with a lid but the jar need not be airtight.

Rose Hip Marmalade

Ingredients: Wild rose hips; sugar. Method: To every pound of rose hips allow half a pint of water. Boil till the fruit is tender. Pass the pulp through a sieve fine enough to keep back the seeds. To each pound of pulp allow a pound of preserving sugar. Boil till it jellies.

Sweet Scented Bags to Lay with Linen

Eight ounces of damask rose leaves, eight ounces of coriander seeds, eight ounces of sweet orris-root, eight ounces of calamus aromaticus, one ounce of mace, one ounce of cinnamon, half an ounce of cloves, four drachms of musk-powder, two drachms of white loaf sugar, three ounces of lavender flowers and some of Rhodium wood. Beat them well together and make them in small silk bags.

-- Mrs. Glasse, The Art of Cookery 1784

Rose Petal Jelly

Ingredients: Dried rose petals; apples; preserving sugar.

Method: Make apple jelly with good cooking apples but do not peel them. Cut them up fairly small, put them in a preserving pan and cover with cold water. Simmer slowly to a pulp. Strain the pulp through a jelly bag and leave to drip all night. Measure the liquid

and to every pint allow a pound of preserving sugar. Stir until the sugar is dissolved and then put in as many dried rose petals as the liquor will hold. Boil till the jelly sets when tested on a cold plate. Strain before potting.

Sources for Recipes: Rose-Petal sandwiches: A Modern Herbal by Mrs. M. Grieve, Vol. 2, page 694. All others: Rose Recipes from Olden Times, by Eleanour Sinclair Rohde.

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Diane
The Prime Mover of the Universe

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Notes from Diane's Garden
Or The Curious Lore and Magical Property of Plants
By Diane Fenster
May, 1987: Vervain
Beltaine Greetings!

Demeter and Kore have been reunited. The earth is green once more. May (from Maya, Maia, Maj or Mai, the Virgin Goddess of Spring) is the traditional month of "the wearing of the green" to honor Mother Earth. It also was (is???!!) a time for fucking in the newly plowed fields to encourage the crops.

All hail the Queen of the May and her King, who wins her by combat to the death with her previous king! The Queen is Diana Nemorensis or Diana of the Wood and the King is her son/lover, Lord of death and rebirth. They're the ones who get to perform the heiros gamos or sacred marriage (see Fraser's *Golden Bough*, chapter I) This leads to congratulations for Don and Yoshiko who had a beautiful handfasting on March 28th (The Great Rite was not performed, however.)

The practice of container gardening can be traced back to the fertility cult of Adonis, who was worshiped by the Babylonians, Assyrians and Phoenicians, and later by the Greeks. Adonis represents the spirit of the green growing world that is cut down by winter but is reborn in the spring. (I believe this is an example of a later patriarchal takeover of the Demeter/Kore myth.) The autumnal disappearance of the green of the

world provoked widespread mourning for the death of Adonis. Aphrodite (his lover) then resurrects him, and spring returns once more. The rejoicing at his return took the form of Adonis Gardens: baskets or pots filled with earth in which wheat, barley, lettuce, fennel, and other quick-sprouting seeds were sown and tended for eight days. When in bloom, they were placed on the housetops or around the statues of Adonis. They were used as charms to promote the growth of vegetation. From this religious rite came the custom of container gardening. First the plants were grown only for the Return of Adonis but the practice later became an all-season decoration of plants in containers. The origin of the window box is also traceable to this same rite.

I would like to encourage you all to try an eight-day ritual of growth like the above so we can all welcome the "return of the green."

This month's topic is Vervain. From the Celtic *ferfaen*-- *fer* (to drive away) and *faen* (stone) The plant was used for affections of the bladder especially stones or calculus.

Another derivation is given as being from *Herba veneris* (herb of Venus) because of its aphrodisiac properties. Not a particularly showy plant like the rose, but one of mighty pedigree nonetheless. It was sprinkled on the altars of Jupiter. Ben Jonson wrote: "Bring your garlands and with reverence place the Vervain on the altar."

Vervain has been used to cure venomous bites and serious diseases. Vervain flowers were worn around the neck in an amulet to guard against fever, measles, smallpox, and the Plague.

Persians (Zoroastrians) made use of Vervain in their worship of the sun. They carried branches of it in their hands as they approached the altar. Druids used Vervain in their lustral water. Also, the name *Verbena* is the classical Roman name for "altar plants" in general so I suspect from the references about altars that Vervain was thought of as a symbol of humility towards the gods. Using Vervain on your altar in the Month of May (while performing the Great Rite perhaps) seems to be in order.

It is one of the plants dedicated to Venus She wore a crown of Vervain intertwined with myrtle. Germans presented newly married women with wreaths of Vervain so as to put them under the protection of Venus. Pliny said, "if the dining chamber be sprinkled in water in which the herb *Verbena* has been steeped, the guests will be merrier."

The Vervain in my herb garden is a rather inconspicuous, low-growing plant until it is time to flower. It then sends up tall shoots which become covered with pale lilac flowers. The plant is extremely fertile and self sows readily.

All in all, it is a plant of Magickal and historical importance and well worth a place in the herb garden.

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Diane
The Prime Mover of the Universe

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Notes from Diane's Garden

Or The Curious Lore and Magical Property of Plants

By Diane Fenster

June 1987: Lilies

June has come to the garden at Mt. Bubba. The roses have blooming since April and some varieties are through for the year. The blue garden seems almost ultraviolet in the noonday sun Renfield the cat spends his days chasing damselflies. An important observation was made while at the beach in Pacifica... the average length of a cormorant's dive is 40 seconds.

Working in the garden puts me in touch with the spirit of those wise women of the past who kept alive the ancient secrets of herbcraft. (Some call them witches.) When the woods and fields were in bloom, they were out seeking the plants that they needed for their potions. There were traditions as to which day and hour were best to gather the plants. The Summer Solstice is of course one of those days. When it was taken over by the Church, it became St. John's Day, June 24th. An old plant spell for gathering on this day uses the initial letters of herbs that spell Johannes (John). It goes:

Jarum (possibly Carum carvi which is Caraway)

Origanum (Marjoram)

Herb benedictu (a Valerian)

Allium (onion or chives)

Nigella (Nigella sativa, a fennel flower)

Nebelkraut (fog -cabbage [Nebel "fog" + Kraut "cabbage"]--thanks, Arden)

Esstrementa (ditto)

Succisa(a Scabiosa or pin cushion flower)

The lilies are coming into their own this time of year, just as the glorious peak of the roses winds on down. Since I think of them as symbolic companions, lilies will be the topic this month, especially the Madonna Lily (*Lilium candidum*).

The lily is seen to represent the Virgin aspect of the Triple Goddess. It was the flower of Lilith, the Sumero- Babylonian goddess of creation. Virgin because of an early belief in the self-fertilizing power of the yoni, reflected in the myth of Juno, who conceived her son Mars with her own magic lily without any male help. The drops of milk that fell to the ground from Hera's breasts became lilies. The milk that stayed in the sky became the Milky Way.

In Crete, the Lily-Scepter was the symbol for the goddess and queen. The church also took this symbol over and also gave it to Gabriel to hold when he wasn't holding just a lily.(see below)

Our friends in the early catholic church also used the lily to symbolize the impregnation of the Virgin Mary because of its earlier pagan associations with virgin motherhood. It was claimed by some ecclesiastical authorities that the lily in Gabriel's hand (pictured in early paintings of the Annunciation) filtered God's semen which entered Mary's body through her ear. Those church folks took the fun out of everything!

The Easter lily was the Medieval pas-flower (from the Latin passus to step or pass over). The lily was also called the passion flower. This came from the pagan representation of the spring passion of the god in a love-death union with the goddess. (The Great Rite again--can't stay away from it!)

In the days when the scents of flowers were thought to be cures for various ailments, the scent of the lily was actually thought to be injurious to one's health. Grave accidents and even death were reported to have resulted from individuals having been exposed to the emanations of lilies during the night. (Great plot for a murder mystery here!)

During the time of the Plague, people avoided the scent of lilies. But contrary to this is an old Roumanian superstition which says "Show me a house where lilies grow and you'll show me a house where the Plague cannot go."

The Madonna Lily was always found growing in the cloistered herb gardens of Medieval monasteries. (I plan to put these lilies in the Mt. Bubba herb garden this fall) It was believed to be a cure for dropsy, dull ears, faint heart, "Byles, Fellons and Unecomies (whatever that is)" and much more of a like serious and alarming nature. The root was the part usually made use of and it was mixed with rosewater or honey. The seeds and flowers were sometimes used. Madonna lilies are supposed to keep ghosts from the house and will only grow for a good woman. (What's my chances of being able to grow this?) In the language of flowers, the white lily represents purity. Its message is "I kiss your fingertips." The tiger lily represents passion and its message is "My love knows no bounds."

"The bond between woman and plant can be followed through all the stages of human symbolism. The psyche as flower, as lotus, lily, and rose, the virgin as flower in Eleusis, symbolize the flowerlike unfolding of the highest psychic and spiritual developments. Thus birth from the female blossom is an archetypal form of divine birth, whether we think of Ra or Nefertem in Egypt, of the Buddhist 'divine treasure in the lotus' or in China and the modern West, of the birth of the self in the Golden Flower."
-- Erich Neumann, The Great Mother.

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Diane
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Notes from Diane's Garden
Or The Curious Lore and Magical Property of Plants
By Diane Fenster
July, 1987: Iris

I would like to start out this month's notes with a dedication of these writings to Jo Steen, my dear friend and first Craft teacher who has always helped me to see the "magic in everyday life."

From the 2nd to the 9th of June, I vacationed in the New England area and got to see a lot of East Coast gardens that were just coming into the fullness of early summer. How different from California, whose gardens and wildflowers have finished their peak display. The flower that seemed most prevalent in these East Coast gardens, no matter how small, was the Iris. Its colorful blooms were everywhere, even as garden escapees by the side of the road. So it seemed fitting to choose the Iris as this month's topic.

The iris was considered a symbol of power by the ancient Egyptians and was placed on the brow of the Sphinx. It was also placed on the scepters of rulers and kings because the three large petals of the flower symbolized faith, wisdom, and valor. The flower was named after Iris, the Greek Goddess of rainbows, who was the messenger of Zeus and Hera. The name Iris is applied to a plant whose different species produce a number of different kinds and colors of flowers, hence its comparison to the rainbow. The Greeks planted irises on the graves of women because one of the duties of Iris was to lead the souls of dead women to the Elysian Fields. I think it could be surmised from this that irises would be appropriate flowers to use in a ritual offering for women who have died.

Medicinal Properties: The chief economic and herbal use of the iris is for the production of Orris Root powder, which is obtained from the three following species. They are flag irises and as such have fleshy, creeping rootstock. (Irises don't stay put where you plant them; their roots are always extending out and they twist into unexpected places.) Orris root powder is used for its lovely violet scent in perfumes and powders, and also as a fixative for potpourris. It is only upon drying (2 years at least) that these rhizomes develop their characteristic fragrance.

Iris Germanica: This is the most common garden bearded iris that people are familiar with. It is a native of southern Europe. The nursery varieties as they now exist are compounds of many species and varieties, since hybridization has been carried on for many years. The juice of the fresh root of this iris when bruised with wine are used as a strong purge in the treatment of dropsy. Old herbalists say that if the dropsy can be cured by the hand of man, this root will effect the cure. The juice is also used as a cosmetic and for the removal of freckles from the skin.

Iris Pallida: A native of eastern Mediterranean countries that has sweet-scented blue flowers. It also yields orris root.

Iris Florentina: Also known as White Flower de Luce or Flower de Luce of Florence. It has large white flowers tinged with lavender. The fresh root is a powerful cathartic. It is from this species that the finest orris root is obtained.

Orris powder is rarely used in herbalism at the present time. But the fresh root possesses diuretic, emetic, and cathartic properties. Given in large doses, it causes nausea, vomiting, purging, and colic. It was used in the treatment of bronchitis and chronic diarrhea. The dried powder was used as a snuff and was used to relieve cases of congested headache.

Oil of Orris is obtained by steam distillation of the powder and has a very delicate odor of fresh violets. It is blended with the artificial violet perfumes to make them more subtle. Powdered orris was put into the rinse water of linens to scent them. Orris was used to give a particular flavor to brandies made in England. The root is used to flavor a drink of honey and ginger sold in Russia, The root of the Verona Iris was shaped for infants' use in teething.

Mount Bubba has many different kinds of Iris growing. The most recent addition is the Florentine Iris spoken of previously. It was obtained during a field trip with Valerie and Ron to Saso's Herb Farm in Saratoga. They have a beautiful herbal display garden there and I highly recommend a visit.

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Diane
The Prime Mover of the Universe

<http://www.compostcoven.org/cnl/diane0887corn.html>

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About this capture

Notes from Diane's Garden
Or The Curious Lore and Magical Property of Plants
By Diane Fenster
August 1987: Corn
It may be that I shall fade, fade and die,
I the young com stalk
A green jewel is my heart but I will see gold
I will be content once it has grown ripe;

The warrior chief is born.
--A song of the Aztec God Xipe

Seed Sower
Grain reborn
Homed One
Come!

--Chant to call up the God, a Compost original by Arden

The topic for August is the Harvest with a bit of corn, wheat and barley thrown in for good measure. This is in honor of the first harvest and the importance of agriculture both in the transition from nomadic hunter-gatherers and in the development of our perception of the Great Goddess as Demeter/Ceres, the Mother of the crops.

August 1st...Lammas/Lughnassad. Lammas is the Saxon Feast of Bread. Here the first grains of the harvest are shaped into ritual loaves and consumed. We eat the body of the God. Lughnassad for Lugh, the Celtic Sun God. This is a fire festival in honor of Lugh's funeral games. Death of the Goddess's Son/Lover.

One representation of Osiris shows the dead God with stalks of corn springing from it. In this way, his body is eaten by his disciples. The story that his mangled remains were scattered throughout the land may be symbolic of the sowing of the seed. Once again we see the community's inner spirituality reflected in the outer events of the great agricultural Wheel of the Year (the death and transformation of the God as symbolized by the staple grain food crops of the early matriarchal societies). Another source tells how the Christian Church used Lammas Day or the Feast of Saint Peter in Chains to replace the earlier Druidic feast of the Gule of August, a celebration of the first harvest.

One derivation of the word Lammas comes from Lamb-mass since it was the custom to present lambs to the church at this time of the year in honor of Saint Peter. Another is from the Anglo-Saxon hlaf-mass for a loaf made from the first ripened grain. An etymological tidbit is that the word hlaf-diga means loaf-giver and the dispenser of bread, hence the mistress of the home. This evolved into the present word, lady.

A harvest ritual is called for. Time to give thanks to the grain which dies and is reborn again and to the Great Mother in whose womb the seed is transformed. Let us use an early custom from Britain and place the first sheaves of corn on our doors. It is also traditional that effigies of the Corn Spirit be carried in procession. These effigies, "corn maidens" or "corn dollies" were fashioned from the last sheaves of the current year's harvest and returned to the field the following Spring to act as protectress to the crops.

I also find that baking is a great ritual. What better a symbol of transformation? When preparing the batter, charge it with thanks for your own personal harvest(whatever you have received this year, materially or spiritually).

Corn Bread

3/4 cup flour
3/4 cup yellow corn meal
2 tsp baking powder
1 egg
2 tbsp sugar
3 tbsp melted butter
pinch of salt
3/4 cup milk

Sift the flour, baking powder, sugar and salt and add the corn meal. Beat the egg, butter and milk in a separate bowl. Pour the liquid into the dry mixture and combine rapidly. Butter an 8 x 8 inch pan and place in the oven until piping hot. Pour the batter into the hot pan and bake for about 25 minutes at 425 degrees. Pre-heating the pan produces a crisp crust.

There are of course many variations to the above recipe. One of the traditional additions is to add some crumbled crisp bacon. You could also add fresh herbs. Be imaginative!

There is a series of European folk beliefs about the Corn Cat and Corn Horse, both as harvest symbols and as grain protector spirits. Each spirit made the welfare of the all-important corn his or her special domain, guarding the crops until maturity. The spirit then took refuge in a sheaf specially dedicated to its use, where it remained until the next seed sowing. It was then placed in the field to watch over the crop again (like the corn dolly mentioned above). Being extremely partial to cats, I'll describe more about them. (Thanks here to Frank Donnola, whose gift of *The Cat in the Mysteries of Magic and Religion* by W. Oldfield Howey put me on the track of this avenue of research.

It is believed that the legend of the murder of Osiris is preserved in some of the European harvest rituals with the Corn Cat in the role of Osiris. Sometimes there is merely the imaginary slaying of an invisible corn spirit, designated as "killing the cat." Peasants in the Vosges Mountains describe the finish of their harvest as "catching the cat." The cat is described as fat or lean depending on the quantity of the harvest. The man who cuts the last handful of hay is the hero. He is regarded as the "Catcher of the Corn Cat." He is presented with a nosegay or a small fir tree that has been decorated with colored ribbons. Harvesters around Vesoul (I don't know where this is, does anyone?) who, as they cut the last corn, cry "We have the cat by the tail." At Briançon in France, when reaping begins, a cat is decorated with ribbons, flowers and ears of corn (I don't think Renfield would like this) and is designated "The Cat of the ball-skin." If any reaper is wounded during the harvest, the Cat must be induced to lick the wounds. When the harvest and the subsequent merry-making was finished, the village girls stripped the cat of its decorations and it was allowed to go in peace.

Other rituals are more ominous. In Silesia, children are warned about going into a cornfield by being told "The Cat sits there" or that "the Corn Cat will come and fetch them." In other localities, a cat is actually sacrificed to insure next year's harvest shades of the Wicker Man). This gets even more symbolic in some parts of France, where a

living cat is placed in the last bundle of corn to be thrashed and is struck dead by the flails. It is then roasted and eaten as a holy day dish. This harks back again to Osiris.

There is a fairytale that tells of Night, the cruel stepmother or witch who forces the maiden Aurora to separate the luminous wheat from the tares of darkness. The maiden weeps over her impossible task until the Cat Moon appears as the Good Fairy and separates the wheat from the darkening sky. But when the night is moonless, a demoniacal black cat, representing the gloom, threatens the hapless maiden Aurora.

As far as the tale of the Corn Horse, it is supposed that this custom began in Greece. It is here that in the cave of Phigalia in Arcadia, Demeter, the Goddess of All Agriculture, whose name means "the Corn Mother" is pictured as a woman with a horse's head and mane. She assumed the shape of a horse in order to avoid the attentions of Poseidon and came to hide in this cave. As in the Demeter/Kore myth, of which this seems to be a later patriarchal version, all plant life dies while the Goddess is in hiding and she must be persuaded to make the crops grow again.

Romans traditionally sacrificed a horse representing the corn spirit. The severed head was decorated with a string of loaves. This was considered necessary to insure the fertility of the earth. Again, this may be a rite that evolved from an earlier human sacrifice of the king to provide for the continued potency of the tribe or, in the case of the sacrificial remains being spread over the fields, a handy supply of organic fertilizer.

Early British coins from the time of Boadicea have pictures of a mare on them. This was the symbol of Ceridwen, the Celtic agricultural Goddess, referred to by the bards as The White Mare, whose form she is said to have assumed.

Peasants in Germany say "there runs the Horse," when they see the shadow made by the wind passing over the bending corn. Also, the last sheaf of oats to be tied was named the Oat Stallion and was supposed to house the spirit that had lived in the crops.

Corn was particularly sacred and powerful in Southwest American Indian religions. Their strains of corn developed into six colors: yellow, white, blue, red, black and speckled representing the six directions: east, north, west, south, up and down. This food was thought to be a gift of the supernatural. Hopis believed it came from the god of vegetation, while Zunis thought it came from the six Corn Maidens whose leader was Yellow Corn, the earliest known strain. With both tribes, a perfect ear of corn was the emblem of a ceremonial leader. A corn ear kept a house safe after a death and protected a newborn child. Cornmeal was used to anoint sacred objects. Sprinkled across a path, it barred an enemy's approach. And it was carried by the kachinas, the spirits of rain and fertility, and was sprinkled before them to "make their road."

"In the summertime we will come again. We will come as clouds from the west, the south, the east and the north to bless the Hopi people and to water their fields and crops. Then the Hopis will see their corn plants majestically growing. They will be so happy they will joyfully sing praises to the spiritual beings who brought moisture. At the

edge of the cornfield a bird will sing with them in the oneness of their happiness. So they will sing together in tune with the universal power, in harmony with the one Creator of all things. And the bird song, and the people's song and the song of life will become one.

--Song of the Long Hair Kachinas from The Book of the Hopi by Frank Waters.

These rituals, begun perhaps as early as the first time seeds were put in the ground to grow, were developed out of a need to protect the crops, insure a harvest and provide enough seeds for the following year. It was imperative to survival that the crops did not fail. People were closer to the land and felt the seasons more acutely. We who are receiving our food secondhand from agribusiness easily forget the life-and-death dramas that our ancestors went through in order to survive.

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Diane
The Prime Mover of the Universe

<http://www.compostcoven.org/cnl/diane0987seeds.html>

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About this capture

Notes from Diane's Garden
Or The Curious Lore and Magical Property of Plants
By Diane Fenster

September 1987: Seeds

Dear friends, I hope your day of Harmonic Convergence was as fruitful as mine. A fire and earth ritual was performed on Twin Peaks, starting at 5:30 am and lasting until about 7:30 am. We found a flat area, off the north parking lot that was facing East. I placed tall votive candles at the four directions; yellow-east, orange-south, blue-west, green-north.

Since this was a sacred day for Meso-American Indian cultures, I felt it was appropriate to draw the circle with cornmeal in the shape of a New Mexico sun sign. Four of us became "keepers of the flame" when it soon became apparent that the wind (which was really rather gentle) had its own ideas about candles staying lit. Miles then began the drumming and we all joined in at intervals with an assortment of musical instruments.

A short time later, Don and Yoshiko, led to us by the sound of the drum, joined in and began a beat of their own. (Yoshiko had made a paper drum for the occasion.) The music rose and fell in a most heartfelt way and I found myself with tears in my eyes.

All this time people kept gathering behind us and friends who knew us joined in the circle. One woman (who I didn't know) danced around us with a pair of birds wings then lay them down in the center of the circle. Then at sunrise, Miles greeted Quetzalcoatl's return with a call from a Pre-Colombian whistle.

We continued the music for a while and then when the time felt right, I walked the circle, putting out the candles. From out of the crowd appeared a man carrying a wonderful magic umbrella decorated with ribbons, crystals, bluebirds and fairies. As I put out the North candle, everyone rose and joined in behind me for a sunwise dance around the circle. My friend Elizabeth, remembering the shadow, walked a Widdershins circle in counterpoint. We all met at the center of the circle with many a hug and a good morning. Then we adjourned to Herb's Fine Food on 24th Street for a breakfast feast.

Continuing to think along the lines of last month's topic, the harvest, I thought that this month I would write a brief article about seeds.

Seeds are both a beginning and an end. A new life grows from a seed and that new life's energy is devoted to producing more seeds. The worm Ourobours with its tail in its mouth, the World Egg, the Wheel of the Year, all these images symbolizing life and death in a continuous circular process. The participants in the Eleusinian Mysteries, after a long night in the Underworld, were shown a stalk of wheat to symbolize the greatest Mystery, the seed that gives up its life in the Autumn is reborn again in the Spring.

In biological terms, the seed is the carrier of the next generation's DNA. Nature has gone to ingenious lengths to insure the DNA's protection while in the seed and also to give the seed the ability to find a hospitable environment when it's time to grow. Think of the dandelion seed. How often have you picked up a ripe one and blown all the seeds away while making a wish? You've watched them float on the wind to faraway places, and in doing this you've been an unwitting participant in Nature's grand design, to ensure the survival of this species by distributing its seeds as far apart as possible so the plants don't overcrowd. There is a legend from Irish folklore that says that when fairies dance in the meadows on a moonlit night, they choose a "Little Green Man" to blow the down of the dandelion away at frequent intervals. This is to tell them how many hours are left until the dawn.

California poppies also have a wonderful method for distribution. When the seed case is ripe, the slightest touch will cause it to explode, propelling the seeds to quite a distance. The common ticks and burrs have another method of distribution, their hooks and claws that enable them to cling to the fur of passing animals.

Mistletoe relies upon the birds to help scatter its seeds, which must germinate high up on the barks of trees, not on the ground. The berries, which are ripe in winter when much other food is scarce, are very viscous, so when a bird eats it the seeds often cling to its beak. In the bird's subsequent attempt to clean itself, the seeds are dislodged, often on another tree. This pulp also acts as a glue, holding the seeds in place, and when it hardens, waterproofing them against rain and snow until the Spring thaw.

In the fall, tumbleweeds break away from their roots, curl their stalks into a ball and are rolled about by the wind. This occurs only when the seeds are ripe and ready for scattering.

The coconut is a noted traveler, riding on the crests of waves to foreign shores. It is now widespread throughout all tropical countries. The nut has a thick fibrous outer husk which makes it light and buoyant in the water. The inner rind is leathery and no seawater can penetrate. Monsoons sweep the shells onto the coasts of India and many legends grew up. One was that the shells were spewed forth by a giant dragon. The monster slept at the bottom of the Indian Ocean but once a year, during the monsoons,

the dragon awoke. The dragon's thrashings caused the giant waves, and the froth that flew from his mouth hardened into the coconut shells.

Countless numbers of seeds have been recommended by herbalists throughout the centuries as cures for "all that ails ye." Fifteen peony seeds taken in wine or mead is a special remedy for those troubled by nightmares or melancholy dreams. Hollyhock seeds boiled in milk or wine removes a hot cough, heals blistered lungs and aids in the treatment of consumption. An old herbal says that "the seed of the Snapdragon is good for nothing in the use of Physicke," but some of the seeds "worne in a linnen cloath hanged about one preserveth a man from being bewitched."

Lettuce seeds bruised and mixed with the white of an egg applied in plaster form to the temples or forehead at bedtime will aid in falling asleep. Actually, lettuce does have narcotic properties but only in minute amounts. Rocket is a common European pot-herb whose young and tender leaves are eaten in salad. But it was the seeds that were of interest to mischievous children. It was said that whoever ate the seeds of the rocket before being whipped would be so hardened as to not feel the pain. But if this didn't work, the child had the recourse of eating a meal of beans and honey or using the oil obtained from laurel berries, both of which was said to take away black and blue marks.

It was a common custom among the tribes of the Americas to place a bowl of edible seeds at the gravesites as offerings for the dead so they would have food for their journey to the hereafter. On All Saints Day, Guatemalan Indians place gourd bowls of roasted calabash seeds and black beans, roasted fowl and cornhusk cigarettes. Anything remaining the following day was burnt and the ashes stirred into the ground so that it would seep down to the dead. A northern California Indian tribe (not stated which one in my sourcebook) put tobacco seeds in the hands of the dead before burial. It was thought that these seeds would then be buried in the next world and would provide a continuous supply.

The Zapotec Indians of southern Mexico bury their dead in caves (thought to be the entrance to the next world). Along with weapons for fighting the beasts encountered during the passage between the worlds and food to give strength, there was also placed a basket of seeds of fragrant wildflowers to be planted upon arrival so one would not be without that earthly pleasure. Cherokee Indians burn cottonseeds to ward off thunder and lightening.

The seeds of a large number of plants are poisonous. This actually is intended to protect the seeds from grazing animals. It's interesting to note however, that even though some of the seed poisons are fatal to humans and most animals, birds and goats can safely eat them. Creech, an early English writer says,
"...Thus hemlock juice prevails
And kills a man, but fattens goats and quails."

Mistletoe and holly berries are poisonous to humans but not to birds. Hemlock is a common roadside plant in California. It grows in the garden at Mount Bubba. Care must

be taken with it however because all parts of the plant are extremely poisonous. Water-hemlock is another poisonous plant. The Klamath Indians crushed water-hemlock seeds and mixed them with the decomposed liver of a deer which had been buried for a few days. The mixture was used to poison the tips of their war arrows. Pokeweed is a common eastern plant of the woods. Children use the dark purple berries to make a crimson ink. But the seeds of this plant are poisonous. The Algonquin Indians extracted a lasting dye from plant and used a dried root powder for swellings and aches and for painting themselves and their garments.

I'll end with a charming tale from the time when Christian and Pagan beliefs were considerably intermingled. Peasants throughout Europe would gather holly branches on Christmas Eve and place them in their houses to entice the wood spirits to enter. They believed the sylvan spirits were homeless at this time of the year because the power of Christian prayer had driven the spirits from their woodland home during Yuletide (Christmas Eve to Candlemas). At Candlemas, the holly was placed outdoors and if hungry birds quickly ate the berries, the peasants knew the wood spirits could return to their homes.

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Diane
The Prime Mover of the Universe

<http://www.compostcoven.org/cnl/diane1087apple.html>

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About this capture

Notes from Diane's Garden
Or The Curious Lore and Magical Property of Plants
By Diane Fenster
October 1987: Apple/Pumpkin/the Day of the Dead
Who can tell
The hidden power of herbes and might of Magick spell?
--Spenser, The Faerie Queene

October, the month of Halloween. The days grow shorter and the night sky is filled with ghosties and ghoulies and things that go bump in the night. Witches, if any month of the rolling year can be called ours, it's this one, so let us dance by the light of the moon.

If ever I feel homesick for the deciduous forests of the East Coast, it's during this month

when the leaves turn colors and the first chill of approaching winter is felt. If any of you out there have never seen this miracle of nature, you owe it to yourself to experience it once in your life.

So for this very witchy month I'll ramble on through the symbolism of the festival, apples, pumpkins, and also touch upon November 2nd, the Day of the Dead, which is so interconnected. I know this seems a bit off the subject of garden folklore, but then I'm a "bit off" too and besides, who wants to be consistent?

We are entering the dark time of the year. A time when Kore returns to the Underworld to live with her consort, the Lord of the Dead. The Celtic Feast of the Dead is Samhain, named for Samana, the Lord of Death or the Grim Reaper. It is a night of divination, traditionally by the ancestral dead who return at this time of the year. In Ireland, fruit still left on the trees after Samhain was thought to be contaminated by Puka, or spirits and was declared unfit to eat.

I really didn't realize how fruitful a topic the apple would be until I peeled aside the mundane skin and cut through to the very core. (Please forgive me, I know it's awful but I just couldn't resist!)

APPLE

(*Malus sylvestris*). Apples have a role in Halloween and seem to have been thought of as a symbol of rebirth. When an apple is cut transversely, a pentacle is revealed. This is the sign of Kore the Virgin, hidden in the heart of Mother Earth, with Demeter, the apple, being the World Soul. It is thought by Robert Graves that the story of Eve is a misrepresentation of icons that showed the Great Goddess offering apples of life to her worshipper. Her Appletree of Life is guarded by her Sacred Serpent.

The game of bobbing for apples is a leftover belief that the apples were symbols of the souls floating in the Cauldron of Regeneration. These apple games hinted at cheating Death, in the guise of Cerridwen, the Sow Goddess and Keeper of the Cauldron. Another source explains that according to Druid rites, the souls had to pass through water in order to reach Avalon. That belief has degenerated into ducking for apples. Apples are also associated with ordeals by fire (Halloween or Samhain of course being one of the fire festivals of the Celts). It seems the only remnant of this is a game that requires a person to eat an apple that is balanced on a small rod of wood which also supports a candle.

Apples abound in the myths and legends of the world. The Apple Macintosh computer is already a legend in its own time. The meaning of King Arthur's Avalon is Isle of Apples. (The land of rebirth and regeneration. Remember, Arthur is the "Once and Future King" and was taken to Avalon by three fairy Queens... the Triune Goddess herself). In the land of the Hesperides grew golden apples. (Perhaps this was a Greek myth about an early visit to the British Isles?) Aphrodite and Eve both carry an apple in their hands. Tantalus vainly reaches for an apple while in Hades.

Scandinavian cultures believed that apples were essential to rebirth. The Norse gods of the Prose Edda have only to eat of the apples that Iduna keeps and they will once again become youthful. They will continue to regain their youth in this manner until "Ragnarok", the Twilight of the Gods. The Yule pig is roasted with an apple in its mouth so that the apple can be its heart in the next life. Snow White seals her doom by eating the poisoned apple of the wicked Queen. In Medieval times, old women were slain for giving an apple to a child who later developed fits. (And put to death for a lot of other reasons too). Again we see a dual symbolism in these myths; the apple as kind and restorative mother goddess and as death dealing crone goddess.

We also find apples being used for divination on Halloween. An apple is peeled, thrown over the left shoulder and the letter of the alphabet that the peel most resembles is the first letter of the name of the future mate. Or sit alone in your bedroom by the light of a solitary candle and eat an apple. When you finish eating, the face of your lover will appear in the mirror. One source says these divinations must be worked at midnight and it's best achieved on a moonlight Halloween. To eat an Allan apple from Cornwall on Halloween brings good luck.

In Devonshire lore, the appletree is ruled by the Moon. Apples that are earmarked for storage through the winter are picked during a waning moon. If an apple to be stored is picked before the wane, it is thought to be "full" and will not keep, but an apple that is picked on the wane is "fasting" and will not rot so quickly. In this same shire it is also thought that if the sun shines on the appletrees on Christmas Day, the following years' harvest will be a good one.

Another curiosity is the belief that if an apple is cut in two and one piece rubbed over a wart, then both pieces put together and tied in two and buried, it will cure the wart. In Northamptonshire and the West of England it is believed that an apple tree blooming after the fruit is ripe is an omen of death. We've met with this superstition before about roses blooming out of season. Early peoples must have feared any deviation from the normal cycles of events in the agricultural year and taken it as an omen of doom.

There was another old English custom regarding the blessing of the appletrees, that of wassailing. The word comes from the Old English was hal meaning be in good health. It was done for the purpose of encouraging the health and fertility of the trees of the orchard but there is evidence that it was practiced in the domestic gardens as well. The season of its practice was from December 25 to Old Twelfth Day, January 18 but Old Christmas Eve, January 5, was the most popular day for the celebration. This consisted of the farmer and his laborers going out into the orchard and drinking a mulled cider toast to the prize tree of the lot. The words to one of the songs is:

Here's to thee, old apple tree!
Whence thou may'st bud and whence thou may'st blow,
And whence thou may'st have apples enow,
Hats full, caps full, Bushel-bushel-sacks-full!

And my pockets full too!
Hurrah!

Well, they call it a song but we all know it's a growth and fertility spell and that this custom must date to the early beginning of agriculture when humans first tried to influence the growth of plants in their favor. The ceremony continues with the company of farmers bowing in salutation to the tree and then rising up as if heavily laden with sacks of apples. A libation of cider was poured on the roots of the tree and some pieces of toast left in the tree for the tree spirit known as the "robin" or as some variations go, to Pomona, Roman goddess of fruit trees. (It is said that the Romans introduced the apple to the British Isles). The final act of this wonderful ritual was to fire a round of shot through the bare branches of the tree to awaken the tree spirit to the coming year. I've read that these events took place every year until the early 20th century but I'd like to believe that there are still some followers of the old ways that practice them still.

Pomona, the apple-mother, was a goddess of all fruition, and as a recognition of such, all Roman banquets began with eggs and ended with apples. From creation to completion in one meal. That's what I call full circle.

PUMPKIN

I feel obligated to write a bit about pumpkins since I think that they are more associated with Halloween in peoples' minds than apples. So here's just a tidbit. Pumpkins, formerly called Pompion, are a North American addition to Halloween, but were cultivated in England as early as 1570. Their method of preparation at that time was to cut a hole in the side and take out the seeds and fiber, then fill the cavity with apples and bake. What a perfect dish for Samhain, combining the two magic ingredients as it does. This later developed into the pumpkin pie which was originally made from pumpkins and apples. An interesting sidenote is that the early recipes for pies call the pie crust the coffin (coffin).

DAY OF THE DEAD

Going full circle, like the Romans, I'll end with a bit more about the symbolism of Samhain and a recipe/ritual for you to try. Since three is a magic number, representing the Triune Goddess, we find that Samhain is actually a three-day fire festival including October 31, November 1 and 2, a time when the night comes upon us and the dead roam the earth.

For the Celts, it was a time of sacrifice, both animal and human, to appease the dark gods. Fearful of encountering ghosts, they blackened their faces or wore masks to hide their identity. So what has come down to us as a time of trick or treat should be remembered in its original form, a time of terror of the unknown. Also, as this was such a dangerous time of year, the Celts made peace with anyone they were fighting with since it was not known who would survive the coming winter.

The Church, with its customary zeal, tried to take over this time of the year with All Saints' Day, November 1. But since most of the early Saints were thinly disguised pagan gods, it's really all the same.

The Mexicans have continued some parts of this tradition by celebrating the Dia de los Muertos, the Day of the Dead. Everyone spends the day visiting their family cemeteries with gifts of flowers, candles and food. Everything is decorated with skeletons, including the food, of which Pan de Muertos is a favorite.

Pan de Muertos (Bread of the Dead)

- 1 yeast cake
- 2 cups sugar
- 1/2 cup lukewarm water
- 6 eggs
- 5 cups flour
- 1/3 cup orange blossom water
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 cup butter
- 1/3 cup milk
- 1/4 cup anisette

Dissolve the yeast in the lukewarm water and let it stand in a warm place. Sift the flour with the salt. Taking about half the flour, add the yeast, mix well, and allow to rise in a greased bowl in a warm place until double in bulk. Cream the butter with the sugar; add the egg yolks and the orange blossom water. Then add the remaining flour, the milk and anisette. Mix well and knead for a few minutes. Then add the egg whites, one at a time, kneading after each addition. Finally add the fermented dough and beat and knead until thoroughly mixed. Allow it to rise in a greased bowl in a warm place until double in bulk. Knead once more and divide into two portions. Remove a bit of the dough from each portion, enough to form two "bones." Shape the dough into round loaves and moisten the tops with water. Place the "bones" in the shape of a cross on each loaf and bake at 375 degrees F for about fifty minutes or until done. The loaves are usually covered with a light sugar glaze when baked.

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Diane
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About this capture

Notes from Diane's Garden
Or The Curious Lore and Magical Property of Plants
By Diane Fenster

November 1987: Foxglove

As I walked through the garden during this past month, I found myself reflecting on an appropriate ritual for the beginning of November. There were lots of possibilities, but after some thought, I realized that the one closest to my heart would use the garden as a metaphor.

The most predominant task a gardener faces at this time of the year is the cutting back of summer's exuberent growth in preparation for the winter. A trimming down so that the plant can support itself through the lean times of less sunlight and less nutrients. A plant that goes into the winter with too much top growth has a higher chance of being killed during the dark, cold times ahead.

We humans have our cycles just like the plants and this month is perhaps a good time to pause and reflect upon the past year, paying attention to what has been lost and what has been gained. And after this has been accomplished, also take the time to clean up all the unwanted mental effluvia and "put out the trash". You Macintosh nerds will have an easy time with this! And so this simple act of pruning will be the November ritual both for my plants and for myself.

A counterbalance is needed to all this deep, dark underground stuff so I decided to write about a charming plant that looks very cheerful on the surface and is an extremely beneficial plant. But as we find so often, what can heal can also hurt, and this plant is also a deadly poison. It's the Foxglove, a fairy flower if there ever was one.

FOXGLOVE

Digitalis purpurea, the common foxglove is a native of the British Isles. Its favorite habitat being the woodland dells that the fairies love to roam in, there was probably an early association in peoples' minds between the two. There seems to be some dispute as to the origin of the name. One source says that it's a shortened form of "folk's glove" and that the fairies used the flowers for gloves. It seems that the fairies cannot go out at night without wearing a cap and so of course their hands must be gloved to match.

Other local names for the plant are Fairy Gloves, Fairy Fingers, Fairy's Thimble and Goblin's Thimble. Because the flower is so well designed to attract the bees, the lower lip having a pattern of dots that says to the bee "this way to the nectar", the plant is also known as Bee-Catcher or Beehive.

In France, it is known as Gant de Notre Dame, or Our Lady's Glove. (Any plant name with the prefix Lady, eg. Ladyslipper, was dedicated to the Virgin Mary). It also seems

that the flower was held in high esteem by the witches of long ago who used to decorate their fingers with the bell shaped flowers, these being known as Witches' thimbles. The Irish call it the Fairy Bell and the Welsh, Menyg elyllon or Elf gloves.

There is another legend as to the origin of the name and that is that the bad fairies gave the flowers to the fox to put on his paws so that he could silently steal into the henhouse. This corresponds with the earliest known form of the word, the Anglo-Saxon foxes glufel (the gloves o' the fox). The list of common names for this flower seem to be as numerous as the fairies themselves.

The foxglove is a bee plant and is extremely favored by them. The shape of the flower seems designed just to accommodate the bees. But it is interesting to note that no other animal will eat the foxglove, perhaps sensing how poisonous it is. The blotches on the flowers, like the spots on butterflies' wings and the tails of peacocks and pheasants are supposed to mark where elves have placed their fingers.

The Latin name Digitalis, (from Digitabulum, a thimble,) was first employed by Leonhard Fuchs, a sixteenth century German herbalist. Culpepper states that the Foxglove is under the dominion of Venus since it has a gentle, cleansing nature and is friendly to nature. He also recommends a foxglove ointment to cure scabby heads and advises us that the Italians use a bruised fresh leaf on wounds to heal them.

Gerard recommends the herb for "those that have fallen from high places." I don't know if he means literally or figuratively. Parkinson says to use the expressed juice as an ointment for scrofulous swellings and the bruised leaves for cleaning old sores and ulcers. It was also prescribed as an expectorant (boiled in wine first) but today this would be thought of as dangerous because of the possibility of poisoning.

It is the Foxglove's action on the heart that has caused its fame today. Digitalis contains four glucosides, three of which are cardiac stimulants. It increases the activity of all forms of muscles tissue but mostly the heart and arteries. It also acts upon the kidneys as a diuretic. Other uses of Digitalis are for neuralgia, insanity, febrile diseases, acute inflammatory complaints and asthma.

Murder mystery fans take note: a murderer's plan can be foiled! Digitalis is an antidote to Aconite poisoning and is given as a hypodermic injection.

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Notes from Diane's Garden
Or The Curious Lore and Magical Property of Plants
By Diane Fenster
December 1987: Holly/Ivy/Mistletoe

The garden in December is a scene of rare beauty. All the summer finery was stripped away during the November pruning and now one sees on down to the bare bones. There is a neatness and sense of order that is not evident when all the plants are in full bloom. A simple, matter-of-fact sort of beauty that asks you to look at it with a different eye.

California is a strange place to garden for one who was brought up with the four seasons, but what it makes me see even more clearly is the cycles of the year. Time is not linear in the garden. Even now, the new green shoots of the early blooming bulbs are pushing their way up towards the light. So let us take heart at this during the dark time of the year as we approach the Winter Solstice, and know that Spring is on the way.

Most all of my free time in November was taken up with preparing for the Philosopher's Stone lecture that I gave on November 29. So I ask your indulgence for using part of that lecture as the December article. Since it's on some Winter plants it fits right in.

HOLLY

Our most frequent association for Holly is of a decoration at Christmastime. This was adopted from a Roman custom of sending Holly boughs, as well as other gifts, to friends during the celebration of the Saturnalia, which began about a week before Christmas. It was considered a female plant and was paired with the male Ivy at the solstice and was used to decorate the doorways. This custom was handed down by the Druids, who decorated their houses with holly and evergreens during the winter so the woodland spirits would have a home.

The days from the Fall Equinox until the Winter Solstice are the dark times of the year. Then, on the solstice, the Goddess gives birth to the Sun King destined to become her lover again. Some people also thought of this time as the victory of the Lord of Light over his shadow twin or tanist, the Lord of Darkness. Many beliefs concerned with new beginnings, including seed-sowing were absorbed by festivals of the Catholic Church and became linked with Christ's birthday. English planting lore states that the best time to plant shallots is Christmas Day.

The plant was a symbol of death and regeneration, sacred to Mother Holle or Hel,

Goddess of the Underworld. Its red berries were the red blood color of life, while the mistletoe's white berries were the color of semen and death. It is of interest to note that so common a practice today as decorating with holly and mistletoe was forbidden by the early church fathers for being too much a pagan tradition, but that tradition was very strongly rooted and continues to this day.

A prolific show of berries on the bush is supposed to be one of the indicators of a hard winter. There was also a custom that to plant on the shortest day (or thereabouts) means to harvest on the longest day (Summer Solstice). This is supposed to be true for broad beans as well. If the sun shows through the leafless boughs of the apple trees on Christmas Day, a fine growth or blossoming could be expected. An east wind on Old Christmas, Jan 6th (there was a calendar change in England and the North American colonies in 1752 to conform with the rest of Europe), promised baskets of fruit the following year. The saying is, a windy year, good for apples. There is also a European belief of ancient origin that the weather of the year's first quarter, not the rain and sun on the growing crops, determines the outcome of the death, decay and new life, since there is no real harvest. Also, wild rough weather was esteemed. Frost helped break up the ground for planting and low temperatures destroyed insect pests.

In the tree alphabet, the Beth-Luis-Nion, Holly is the 8th letter T or Tinne. A Christian legend tells us that Holly first sprang up under the footsteps of Christ, the thorny leaves and red berries being representative symbols of his sufferings. Pliny states that the Holly repelled poison and lightning and protected from witchcraft, if planted near a house. The wood had the unique property of filtering wine from water. Its flowers caused water to freeze and if the wood was thrown at an animal, it would compel the animal to come lie down next to the tree.

An old carol will end the tale of Holly and begin that of another winter plant:

"Christmastide
Comes in like a bride,
With Holly and Ivy clad"

IVY

Sacred to the White Goddess, as were all five-pointed leafed plants like the vine, bramble and fig, also five petaled flowers like the briar rose, primrose and periwinkle. Ivy was also sacred to Osiris and Dionysius. The plant was also dedicated to Bacchus, who wore a crown of Ivy. He was hidden from the wrath of Juno by his aunt Ino, who placed him under Ivy leaves in his cradle.

Symbol of rebirth because it twines in a spiral. The Greek priests gave newlyweds a wreath of Ivy because it is the symbol of fidelity.

Bacchantes (Bassarids) carried fir tree branches wrapped with Ivy as they ran about the mountains intoxicated on spruce ale laced with Ivy. They may also have chewed Ivy leaves. It was also thought that it would prevent the effects of intoxication. There was an

ancient practice of binding the brow with Ivy to prevent intoxication.

The flowers of the Ivy yield an abundance of food for the bees at a time when other sources are scarce from October through December.

There is a rivalry between the Holly and the Ivy mentioned in Medieval English carols that represents the "Battle of the Sexes". In parts of England, the last farmer to harvest the crops had the final sheaf bound with Ivy. This was called the Harvest Bride or Harvest Girl or Harvest May. This was a penalty and an omen of ill luck until the following year. The Ivy then came to mean a shrewish wife from the notion that Ivy strangles trees. There also was the tradition that on Yule morning, the first foot over the threshold had to be a dark man, the Holly Boy, and precautions were taken to keep women out of the way. There was also a Yule custom in which Ivy Girls and Holly Boys played games for precedence and sang satirical songs against each other.

Ivy was not granted the same honor as Holly, to come inside and decorate the inside of the house, but its place was outside as a sign of good cheer within. It was formerly a custom to hang an Ivy bush (called a tod of Ivy) outside a tavern in England. Out of this custom arose the proverbs, "Good wine needs no bush" i.e., the reputation is sufficiently good without further advertisement and "An owl in an ivy bush" denoting the union of wisdom with conviviality.

MISTLETOE

Most sacred plant to the Druids. Remains of it have been found in conjunction with oak branches in Bronze Age burials in Yorkshire. Pliny states that the prime religious ritual of the Druids "in the service of God Himself" was the harvesting of Mistletoe "which they call heal-all in their language" and "which falls from Heaven upon the oak." Oaks upon which the Mistletoe grew were venerated because of the cures the priests were able to effect with it. Branches of the Mistletoe were carried around to herald the entrance of the new year.

It's known too in Norse mythology as the plant that was used by Loki to kill Balder; Mistletoe had been the only plant excused from swearing to do Balder no harm because it was too young to possibly harm him. When Balder was restored to life, the Mistletoe was given to the Goddess of love to be under her dominion. It was then ordained that everyone passing under the mistletoe should receive a kiss, to show that it had become a plant of love, not hate.

The Latin viscus and the Greek ixias are connected to the words vis and ischus meaning strength. This is thought to be due to the viscous white berries' resemblance to sperm, the vehicle of life. The cutting of Mistletoe from the oak with a golden sickle (gold being the metal of the sun and the sickle being the lunar crescent of the Goddess) was symbolic of the emasculation of the old king by his successor. The successor then becomes King in the ritual of the Hieros Gamos, the sacred marriage of the Mother. Such rituals concerning the death and rebirth of the sun each year were our ancestors'

ways of explaining the natural phenomena that they observed. These rituals, like the cycle of Katchina dances that the Hopi perform, were meant to insure the survival of the tribe from year to year and perhaps with an even greater view in mind, to keep the world turning in its appointed rounds.

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Notes from Diane's Garden
Or The Curious Lore and Magical Property of Plants
By Diane Fenster
January 1988: Flowers
Periwinkle
Cowslip
Primrose
Violet)

The Winter Solstice has come and gone. The child of light has just been born so we only have a glimmer of the brightness to come. So it is down here at the Mount Bubba Institute. Even on those sunny days, we lose the light early in the day because the sun's angle in the sky causes it to disappear behind Mount Bubba until Candlemas.

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Down with the Baies and Mistletoe;
Down with the holly, ivie, all
Wherewith ye dressed the Christmas Hall.
That so the superstitious find
Not one least branch left there behind;
For look, how many leaves there be
Neglected there, maids trust to me
So many goblins you shall see.

As far as this month's topic goes, all good cooks know that leftovers, if well prepared, can be as appetizing as a freshly cooked meal. These flowers also have been recycled from my lecture at the bookstore. But since most of you readers weren't there, you won't be able to tell the leftover from the original. So go ahead and eat already.

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In Italy, the plant is known as Death's Flower from the ancient custom of using the plant to make garlands for dead infants. In Medieval England, condemned men were garlanded with Periwinkle on their way to the gallows. It is written that the leaves of the periwinkle eaten by husband and wife do cause them to love each other. In the language of flowers, the periwinkle means sincere and unalterable friendship. Nosegays of this flower are sent as presents to lovers and friends.

COWSLIP

The Cowslip, *Primula veris*, is another plant regarded as a fairy flower, also being known as Fairy Cups. The little folk love to nestle inside drooping bell shaped flowers.

The flower is known as the Key-Flower in Germany. Two explanations are given for this name: one is that the drooping bunch of flowers look like keys, the other is that it is in reference to the ability of the plant to aid in finding magical treasure.

Cowslips were also called Saint Peter's Wort in some of the old Herbals, the plant's resemblance to a bunch of keys being likened to the badge of the apostle.

In speaking of Titania, Queen of the Fairies, Shakespeare writes:

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The Cowslip is one of the flowers dedicated to the May Queen, Flora. Marsh Marigolds, Stitchwort and Lady's Smock are some of the others. Many flowers formerly dedicated to the Great Goddess were re-dedicated to the Virgin Mary in early Christian times.

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In ancient Greece, these beautiful flowers were cultivated for their perfume and sweetening qualities. They were held in such regard that they became an emblem of the city of Athens. They were used by the Athenians to moderate anger, procure sleep and comfort and strengthen the heart.

Ancient Britons used the flower as a cosmetic. In a Celtic poem they are recommended to be steeped in goat's milk and taken to increase female beauty. The blooms were used as a strewing herb in the Middle Ages. Their fragrance helped dispel the musty smell of damp houses and unwashed people.

Violets have a symbolic language. The blue variety is said to mean faithfulness as do most flowers that are "true blue". Rural happiness is symbolized by the yellow violet or wild pansy and innocence or modesty by the white.

Like primroses, Violets have a joyful connotation because they herald the coming of Spring. They are among the first plants to bloom. They have also been associated with death, especially of the young, perhaps because the flowers bloom so early and never get a chance to see the full bloom of Summer. If violets are plentiful in Autumn, an epidemic is expected. Any plant blooming out of season is a disastrous omen.

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Diane
The Prime Mover of the Universe

<http://www.compostcoven.org/cnl/diane0188flowers.html>
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About this capture

Notes from Diane's Garden
Or The Curious Lore and Magical Property of Plants
By Diane Fenster
January 1988: Flowers
Periwinkle
Cowslip
Primrose
Violet)

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Diane
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<http://www.compostcoven.org/compost/handfast.html>

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About this capture

A Handfasting

A Celebration of The Marriage of Valerie Walker and Ron Miller

originally celebrated on Winter Solstice 1977; renewed Dec. 20, 1987; renewed again Dec. 25, 1997

Valerie casts circle before guests arrive, leaving doors for them to enter. When all are assembled, they gather in a circle. Each guest is given a candle to hold. Ron and Valerie stand by a small table with a lit candle on it. She begins:)

V: East, South, West, North, Above, Below, Past & Future--they form the sphere of the Universe. We are, each one of us, at the center of that sphere. When two people marry, they meet at that center, and both are changed.

R: Let us share light around the circle.

(He lights the candle of the person to his right, while Valerie lights the candle of the person to her left. The light travels in both directions to meet at the other side of the circle.)

V: Today is the birthday of the sun, a good time for new beginnings. In some ways, what we do today is not new--it has been building for years. But today we announce and declare our marriage as an accomplished fact. Our marriage is not bondage.

R: We are bound to each other of our own free wills.

V: We love each other.

R: Our bond is formed by our love.

V: Each of us is an independent entity with an individual life to live.

R: Each fills needs for the other which are necessary for happiness & fulfillment in this life.

V: We form a union of two into one so that the two might become more complete in themselves.

R: We join our lives by choice.

V: We each face inward toward each other.

R: We also face outward toward the world.

V: Our parents and family, we ask your blessing on our union.

R: As you unite through us, we welcome you to our family.

V: Our friends, we ask your blessing on our union.

R: As you unite through us, we welcome you to our community.

We are here to make our solemn vows to each other, and you are here to bear witness to them.

V: I vow to you, in the presence of the Gods and of these friends, that I will be to you a loving and faithful wife and companion as long as I live. Symbolic of this vow, I give you this ring, round as the circle of time (places ring on his finger).
Wear it with my love, now and forever.

R: I vow to you in the presence of our family and friends that I will be to you a loving & faithful husband and companion as long as I live. Symbolic of this vow, I give you this ring, round as the circle of time (places ring on her finger).
Wear it with my love, now and forever.
We have declared ourselves to be husband and wife.

V: What the Gods have joined, let no man put asunder. SO MOTE IT BE.
East, South, West, North: the circle is open but unbroken. May the peace of the Goddess go in your hearts. Merry Meet and Merry Part. BLESSED BE.

(Feasting and general rejoicing follows.)

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moi

In full Witchy regalia and feeling my oats.

<http://www.compostcoven.org/cnl/diane0288daisy.html>

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By Diane Fenster

February 1988: Daisy/Borage

The Dharma Dumplings spent Christmas and New Years' in Jacksonville, Florida. The highlights of the trip were getting to see a specimen of Marechal Niel, a beautiful old Noisette rose from the 1800's that is not frequently grown and a chance to chow down at Mrs. Wilkes Boarding House in Savannah, Georgia. Southern cooking at its best!

February is a time for celebration down at the Mount Bubba Institute because on Candlemas, the sun returns from the shadow of Mount Bubba once again. On the evening of the 2nd, I lit candles in the four directions and welcomed the return of the light.

As I watch the plants come out after our brief California winter, I'm still reminded of the resiliency of life on this planet. Gaia has given us much to be thankful for.

DAISY

Bellis perennis. The name is a contraction of *days eye*, for the habit the flower has of opening by day and closing at night. The plant also folds its petals over the yellow center when it rains, thus protecting the reproductive parts.

This is the more diminutive of the daisies; the ones we commonly think of as daisies are the ox-eye daisies or marguerites. There are three legends concerning the origin of the flower. The first, from approximately the fourteenth century, says that Alcestis was turned into a daisy. Another says it (*bellis*) was named after Belides, granddaughter of a Dryad, who attracted the attentions of Vertumnus, a local deity. Just as he was about to seize her, she was turned into the daisy. The third legend tells how the daisy became the symbol of innocence. An old Celtic legend says that each baby that dies becomes a spirit which scatters down on earth a new flower to cheer the bereaved parents.

Malvina, who lost her infant son was consoled by the Virgins of Morven (I suspect this is Morgan le Fay, the Celtic death goddess.) They told her that her son had sent a new flower to earth and this flower was the daisy. There is a saying that Summer has not arrived until you can put your foot on seven of the flowers.

Of course we all know the divination that is possible to perform using the daisy. Loves me, loves me not...

BORAGE

Gerard the Herbalist says:

"Those of our time do use the flowers in sallads to exhilarate and make the mind glad. The leaves and flowers of Borage put into wine make men and women glad and merry and drive away all sadness, dulness and melancholy. Syrup made of flowers of Borage comforteth the heart, purgeth melancholy, quieteth the phreneticke and lunaticke person."

Several sources for the name of this herb are indicated. One is that the Latin *Borago* is a corruption of *corago*, for *cor*, the heart and *ago*, I bring because of the effect of gladdening the heart that the plant produces. There is also the possibility that the word comes from the Celtic *barrach*, meaning a man of courage. Hence the old verse,

I, Borage
Bring alwaies courage.

According to Dioscorides and Pliny, Borage was the drink Nepenthe mentioned by Homer. When the plant was steeped in wine and drunk, it brought absolute forgetfulness.

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Brigid Ritual

freely adapted from various sources (thanx to Willow and Adam McLean)

(ALTAR SETUP: in center, bowl of earth with one large white taper; white candles for each person present lying nearby. Sage in mortar, matches and feather nearby. Salt, water in bowl. Goddess and God images. White flowers if possible.)

H.Ps. (Light point candles. Purify with salt water. Purify with burning sage. Cast circle.): This is the night of Brigid, the Feast of the Waxing Light. Tonight the Goddess makes her annual transformation from Crone to Maiden, from Winter to Spring.

We celebrate the powers of Inspiration and Illumination, the growth of our own individuation with the growth of the light. In olden times this was the first celebration of Spring, the preparation for the germination and regrowth to come later. This was pictured through the myth of Bride and the Cailleach. The three months of winter from Samhain to Brigid were under the power and government of the Cailleach, the Old Woman Goddess, who embodies the forces of contraction and is the enemy of growth. Each year, on the Eve of Bride, as the first glimmer of dawn appears, the Cailleach drinks of the Well of Youth and is transformed into the fair young Goddess Bride. At the celebration of Brigid we celebrate the mystery of the germination of the seed after the cold contractive forces of winter, the Cailleach, are withdrawn, and the youthful energies of the Maiden aspect of the Goddess inspire and illuminate all life, physical and spiritual. Let us now invoke the Lady, by the names of Brigid, Bride, Brigidu, Brigantia

(CHANT)

(READ THE CHARGE OF THE GODDESS)

H.Ps.: Now let us invoke her Son, Brother and Lover, the God who was born again at the Winter Solstice and who grows in strength and beauty every day.

All CHANT: Seed sower, grain reborn, Horned One, come!

(H.Ps. faces South from North position. Call-and-response CHANT, with H.Ps. doing all the lines beginning with "Out of the..", and everyone else doing the responses):

H.Ps.: Out of the night
All: Before the beginning
Out of the dark
Before the light
Out of the cold
Before the warmth
Out of the womb
Before the birth
Out of the sleep
Before the waking
Out of the old
Before the new
Out of the silence
Before the sound
Out of the stillness
Before the shaking
Out of the illusion
Before the true
Out of the seed
Before the sprout
Out of the dawn
Before the day
Out of the echo
Before the shout
Out of the maze
Before the way

(H.Ps. travels deosil to S. point candle and lights taper. Holds high to N. and says):

H.Ps.: Fire of the Heart
(All repeat antiphonally)
Fire of the Mind
Fire of the Hearth
Fire of the Wind
Fire of the Art
Fire beyond Time

(explain chant and procedure to follow: All chant and dance if room):

"Wearing my longwing feathers as I fly
I circle around
I circle around
The boundaries of the earth."

(Go into free chanting, yelling, clapping, rattles, etc. Each person takes a taper and lights it from central cauldron taper. Place in earth, saying what they wish to grow in their life. Let cone of power peak when all have done this, then drop and ground it in

cauldron.)

H.Ps.: Now let the power pass from me
To end where it was begun
Chant the spell and be it done
AS I DO WILL SO MOTE IT BE!

(Bless and share cakes and wine. Show and tell--any and all works of poetry, smithcraft, inspiration. Partying. Open circle. Group hug.)

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Notes from Diane's Garden
Or The Curious Lore and Magical Property of Plants
By Diane Fenster
March 1988: Rue

With this article, we have come full circle round the wheel of the year. I'd like to tell you all what a great pleasure it is for me to be writing these notes. Each new article brings more knowledge from the research.

A highlight of this past year was the slide lecture on garden folklore that I presented at the Philosopher's Stone Bookstore on November 28th. I hope to give this lecture again in the near future at another location, so stay tuned.

Once again, for you new readers, I welcome comments, feedback, additional information, etc. You can find me at: Diane Fenster

Inspiration for what the subject matter of these notes will be each month is generally provided by intuition or synchronicity. For this writing, the inspiration grew out of the curiosity surrounding a beautiful specimen of Rue in Elizabeth and Piaf's garden. My thanks to them for asking questions.

RUE

There's Rue for you; and here's some for me: we may call it Herb-grace o' Sundays: O, you must wear your Rue with a difference.
--Hamlet, act iv, sc. 5

Ruta graveolens or Garden Rue is an herb of the Sun, under the sign of Leo. The name Ruta is from the Greek reuo (to set free) because it is so useful in the treatment of disease. It is a native of Southern Europe.

It is one of the oldest herbs in cultivation. Rue is also called the "Herb of Grace" since at one time it was used to sprinkle holy water.

It is a very magical herb and as such was used in many different ways by the ancients. The two most frequent herbs stated to be used by the witches recorded in the proceedings of the witch trials were Rue and Vervain. Rue was the chief ingredient of the antidote to Mithridates' poison. It was considered a powerful defense against witches and was also thought to bestow second sight.

The Greeks came to think of Rue as an antidote to witchcraft or fascination. It was not their custom to eat with strangers, and when forced to do so, they often became nervous and excited and developed flatulency and indigestion. This was blamed on witchcraft or the action of an evil spirit. Since Rue was found to alleviate the stomach symptoms, it was concluded that Rue was an effective charm against the strangers' spells.

Rue was also used as a preservative of the eyes. It was thought to make the sight both sharp and clear and was often eaten by painters in the Middle Ages. It is considered even more efficacious than Eyebright.

There was a custom in England for judges sitting at the assizes to have sprigs of Rue placed on their benches to ward off contagion from the prisoners. Sprinkling rue-water about your house will kill the fleas.

Gerard states that:

"If a man be anointed with the juice of rue, the poison of wolfsbane (aconite), mushrooms, or todestooles, the biting of serpents, stinging of scorpions, spiders, bees, hornets and wasps will not hurt him."

I personally wouldn't go so far as to test any of the above however. Aconite especially is a deadly poison.

There is a superstition in the Tyrol that names Rue as one of the five plants, which when bound together, enable the bearer to see witches, or if hung over the doorstep, will prevent a witch from entering and will hold her/him there. The other plants are Broomstraw, Agrimony, Maidenhair and Ground Ivy.

Time after time I come across divination spells regarding love and marriage. Plants seem to be an integral part of these spells. Once again we find Rue being used to tell a maiden how long she will remain single. A magic wreath is made, composed of Rue, Willow and Cranesbill (a wild form of geranium). The maiden walks backwards towards a tree and tosses the wreath. The number of tosses it takes to catch on a branch is the number of years she will remain single.

As far as the garden grows, Rue is bad for cabbages and many herbs. Old wives lore says that Rue planted near sage can make the sage poisonous, or kill the sage. It may also kill any basil growing near it. Another superstition claims that Rue will prosper in your garden if your cutting was stolen from a neighbor's garden. Rue is also better grown on lean soil, it will overwinter with less damage this way.

Medicinally speaking, Rue is frequently mentioned in the Saxon Leech books and was prescribed for a great many ailments. It was thought of as one of the "heal-all" plants with its strong aromatic odor and very bitter taste. The leaves also can have a blistering effect on the skin.

It is strongly stimulating and antispasmodic. But in excessive doses it can be poisonous and because of its emetic properties should not be taken just after eating. The bruised leaves of the plant, if applied to the skin, will help allay the pains of sciatica. Fresh leaves applied to the temples will cure a headache.

Pliny claims that even weasels knew of the virtuous properties of Rue and partook of the plant in preparation for a fight with a rat or a scorpion.

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Diane
The Prime Mover of the Universe

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Notes from Diane's Garden
Or The Curious Lore and Magical Property of Plants

By Diane Fenster
May 1988: Parsley

There was a custom among the ancient Greeks to border their gardens with Rue and Parsley. From this arose a figure of speech, "to be at the parsley and rue," which meant that an undertaking had been talked about, but not yet begun. Since we discussed Rue in the last article, Parsley (*Apium petroselinum* from the Greek, Petros, meaning rock because the wild plant was said to favor rocky places) now follows.

Because the Parsley seed lies so long in the ground before it germinates, it is said to go nine times to the Devil before it comes up. There is a way of preventing this however, just sow the seeds on Good Friday (between the hours of twelve and three are most efficacious since these are the hours of the crucifixion) when the soil is not under the power of the Devil, and your parsley will grow. If you happen to have missed your chance last month, don't worry, you can also deter Satan and get your Parsley to grow by pouring boiling water over the freshly sown seeds. In some areas it is thought unlucky to grow parsley, even though the plant has such widespread medicinal and culinary uses. Perhaps this is because of its ancient associations with death, the plant rising from the blood of the Greek hero Archemorus. The Greeks decorated their tombs with the plant and it was woven into wreaths to be worn by the winners of funeral games. It was never brought to their tables, being held sacred to oblivion and the dead.

The plant was also strewn on graves, hence the expression "to be in need of parsley" which means to be at death's door. It is also considered extremely unlucky to transplant Parsley; many old gardeners in England have been known to refuse this task for fear of death. It was also considered unlucky to bring Parsley seeds into the house. Parsley lore seems to be associated with sex as well as with death. There is a belief that if boy babies are found under the gooseberry bush, girls are found in the parsley patch. A man's potency is aided by Parsley. Gloucestershire village folk consider parsley wine an aphrodisiac. Also, if a man doesn't want to have all daughters, he must uproot any overlush patches of parsley in the garden. If a woman of child-bearing age engages in sowing parsley, she will be pregnant before the seeds germinate.

The most familiar uses we have for Parsley are of course found in the kitchen but there are medicinal uses for Parsley as well. An oil called Apiol is extracted from the seeds, the best being obtained from a variety called Triple Moss. It is considered to be an emmenagogue.

There is a popular remedy that was used in France to cure scrofulous swellings. Green parsley and snails were pounded together to make an ointment that was applied to the affected part. A poultice of the fresh leaves can be used as a remedy for bites and stings of poisonous insects. Culpepper states that:

"It is very comfortable to the stomach...good for wind and to remove obstructions both of the liver and the spleen..."

There is a reference to the "Toilet of Flora" which is probably an old book on herbal potions that says that one can prevent baldness by powdering your head with powdered

parsley seeds for three nights every year and your hair will never fall off. For you gardeners out there, it is important to note that a plain leaf parsley will overwinter far better than a curly leaf variety. (although us California folk generally don't have much to worry about unless you're in an area that receives frost.)

Parsley Soup

1 teaspoon salt
1 tablespoons butter
2 tablespoons flour
1 medium onion
1 cup Water
2 cups milk

Melt butter, add flour and salt, the liquids and onion. Boil for one hour. Remove the onion and add 1/2 cup of cream mixed with the yolks of two eggs. Cook until thickened. Just before serving add 1/2 cup finely chopped parsley. Stir well and serve at once.
-- from Gardening with Herbs for Flavor and Fragrance by Helen Morgenthau Fox

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Diane
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About this capture

Notes from Diane's Garden
Or The Curious Lore and Magical Property of Plants
By Diane Fenster
Lammas 1988: Datura

In our travels round the wheel of the year, we have slipped past the high point of Litha and are winding our way down to Samhain and the dark times. It seems appropriate to begin a series of notes on some of the plants from the shadow side, those little pretties that have a mysterious or deadly aura to their nature. Don't be afraid, my friends, you're safe as long as you don't eat them.

As I have told you in the past, my inspiration for the topics of these notes comes from the flotsam and jetsam that the universe sends my way. This time the thanks goes to

Point Reyes for a plant I found growing there recently, *Datura stramonium*, also known as Jimson Weed or Thornapple. The plant attracted my attention because I noticed some lavender flowers out of the corner of my eye while we were driving. I suspected they were *Datura* but I was only familiar with the white flowered variety. On closer inspection I was pleased to find a beautiful group of these plants with their seedpods looking like thorny apples, which is why it's also known as Thornapple. I cut one off and now have it in front of me for inspiration while writing the article. (Renfield the cat has also placed himself between the keyboard and Pandora, my Macintosh computer. He wants everyone to know that he is also a great source of inspiration). When I am finished, I'll place the thornapple on my altar as an offering to Hecate. Renfield I believe, is already a manifestation of Hecate.

The first time I ever saw *Datura* growing in the wild was around the Puye Cliff Dwellings in New Mexico. I'll never forget the picture of the startling whiteness of the flowers against the red sandstone earth, with a backdrop of the bright blue New Mexico sky. I later found out that this was also where Georgia O'Keeffe saw her *Datura* that became one of her paintings.

DATURA

The generic name *Datura* means angel's trumpet, taken from an oriental vernacular name. Another source states that the spelling is more correctly 'Dhatura', from the Sanskrit dhat, a poison made from *Datura metel*, an Indian species of Thornapple. The garden shrub named angel trumpet, with the intoxicating fragrance, is a *Datura* also, but a different species. *Stramonium* is the powerful narcotic and poison that is derived from this plant. Hyoscyamine, scopolamine and atropine are the other alkaloids found in all parts of this plant. Actually, the scent of the flowers alone can have a stupefying effect and also cause mild poisoning to those that are sensitive. (Once again the plant world offers us another plot for a murder mystery). The plant is under the sign of Venus.

Datura has a sinister history. *D. metel* was used by the Thuggis or Thugs, the worshippers of Kali, to stupefy the human sacrifices that Kali demanded and to whip the Thuggis into a maniacal state from which they could attack and kill wayfarers. Some scholars identify Kali with Io, whom the Maenads believed to be the mother of Dionysus. It is believed that the Maenads also used the juice of the Thornapple to produce states of ecstasy, during which they ripped their victims to shreds. It is also thought that the oracle of Delphi drank a concoction of *Datura* to induce a prophetic state. In the 17th century, a French diplomat reported that when the bees sucked the nectar of the Persian *Datura*, the resultant honey was so poisonous that a spoonful was fatal (yet another mystery plot here).

In the Southwest, *Datura* is known as Locoweed, due to its ability to drive mad the humans or cattle that eat it. Remember, it was the strongest and most dangerous of Don Juan's allies.

It seems as though the Thornapple was an early stowaway on board the first ships to the American colonies. It soon planted itself in Virginian soil and became a prevalent

weed, earning itself the nickname "Jamestown Weed" (hence Jimson Weed, another nickname). A diary from 1676 notes that a group of soldiers camped at Jamestown mistakenly used the leaves in a soup, with comical results, since the plants were young enough, it is supposed, to not have had a more disastrous effect. Seems as if these men turned into the town fools for eleven days, blowing feathers in the air, sitting naked and gesturing like monkeys and generally acting as if mad. When they regained their sanity, it was reported that they didn't remember a thing that happened to them.

The notorious effects of the Thornapple didn't stop it from being used in love potions since it has the ability to sexually arouse the victim against his/her will and even perhaps cause loss of consciousness (that may or may not be a desired trait, depending on what kind of sex you're into. I always say that a partner that responds is a lot more fun, but to each his/her own, I guess). This ability gave the plant the name "love-will" and it was used by "brothel-keepers, wicked seducers of girls, depraved courtesans and shameless lechers" states one German writer. "The whores administer to those who have the misfortune to fall into their hands half of five grammes of these seeds in order to profit from their madness."

--Von Aphelen, General Natural History, 1767

Another name was "sorcerer's herb" because it was one of the ingredients in the famous flying ointment used by the Medieval Witches. This ointment and its possible ingredients has always been a fascinating topic to me and I plan to make it the subject of my notes for Samhain this year. The plant is a member of the order Solanaceae, where we also find tomatoes, potatoes and the nightshades. Datura is considered the easiest to grow of all the magical plants. The flowers open at night and are pollinated by the night-flying moths. The fragrance is extremely powerful. Once started, it will re-seed itself year after year. Just give it a sunny place, since its original home is thought to be from the areas surrounding the Black Sea and the Caspian Sea. Protect it from the wind and it will be happy.

The medicinal actions of the plant are as an antispasmodic, anodyne and narcotic. In many ways, the action is similar to Belladonna, which is derived from the nightshade. It was fashionable at one time to treat asthma by the inhalation of smoke from the burning leaves of Datura. Stramonium, when applied locally as an ointment, relieves the pain of muscular rheumatism, neuralgia, hemorrhoids and abscesses.

Gerard states that "the juice of the thornapple, boiled with hog's grease, cureth all inflammations whatsoever, all manner of burnings and scaldings, as well of fire, water, boiling lead, gunpowder, as that which comes by lightning and that in very short time, as myself have found in daily practice, to my great credit and profit."

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Notes from Diane's Garden
Or The Curious Lore and Magical Property of Plants
By Diane Fenster

Mabon 1988: Aconite and Belladonna

Hello, my pretties. I hope you all survived your encounter with the first of our poisonous plants? Are you ready for the next two? They also are known to be ingredients in the infamous flying ointments of the Medieval Witches. The first is Aconite, which causes an irregular action of the heart; the other is Belladonna which produces delirium. As the theory goes, these combined symptoms, as well as the properties of the other ingredients, gave a "sensation" of flying. But we all know better, don't we. I mean, what were those broomsticks for anyway?

ACONITE

Aconitum napellus, known as Wolfsbane or Monkshood, is named from either aconitum, which means a poisonous plant, or the Greek akon, a dart, since the plant was used as arrow poison. It is also known as Wolfsbane from the practice that hunters had of injecting bait meat with the juice of Aconite so that the wolves would be poisoned when they ate the flesh. Before the advent of Christianity, the plant was known as Odin's helmet, Thor's Hat, or Tyr's helm, since the shape of the flower reminded people of the headgear worn by the old European Gods. With the arrival of the Benedictine monks with their cowl headpieces, the plant then became known as Monkshood.

As far as the legends go, the plant was thought to have sprung from the drops of spittle of Cerberus, the three-headed dog of the Underworld, as Hercules dragged the monster out while performing his twelfth labor. I have also read that the plant was the invention of Hecate, who also made it from the saliva of Cerberus. Since the latter legend predates the Hercules myth, and the poison's connection with Hecate is symbolically on firmer ground, I suspect it to be more valid, the former probably being a patriarchal invention. Also, Aconite was present in the drink that Medea offered Theseus. He threw the drink to the ground where it caused the marble to crack.

Astrologically, the plant is under the influence of Saturn. In Germany, the plant is sacred to the devil. It is also one of the plants dedicated to Hecate, and so would also have a lunar influence. You would do well to place this plant on her altar as an offering to the dark side, especially if entering upon spellwork that calls for a journey to the underworld. I see Aconite as being one of the plants that a shaman would carry in a magic pouch as

a symbol for the flight of the soul.

Aconite seeds were useful in one of the charms that the old village wisewomen would concoct. A few seeds of the plant (three, six or nine) wrapped with a lizard's skin would grant the bearer the power to become invisible. In the Language of Flowers, Aconite, with its seedpods shaped like urns, was symbolic of crime. It is one of the most virulent poisons known. All parts of the plant are extremely deadly, cases having been reported in the old herbals of people dying from the ingestion of a few flowers in a salad or a few leaves thought to be that of another species. The juice of the plant was used to poison wells and springs as a defensive action. Among the peasants, it was considered the most suitable means of doing away with one's husband or wife. The aristocracy preferred Hemlock, the drink that killed Socrates, but that story is for another garden note.

So mark my warning well. Use extreme care when handling this plant, especially if you have an open cut on your hand. If the juice from the plant enters the cut, you could experience pains in the limbs, and a sense of suffocation and syncope. To make matters even worse, there is no effective antidote to the Aconite poison, but, as the substance breaks down quickly within the body, if one can artificially keep the respiration process of the affected person in operation until the danger is over, there is a chance of survival.

BELLADONNA

Atropa belladonna, the deadly nightshade, is the other plant I wish to introduce to you. The generic name comes from *Atropos*, one of the three Fates. She is the one who cuts the thread of life, and as such, she is related to Kali, Cerberus, Lilith and other manifestations of the dark side of the Great Mother. The origin of the name *Belladonna*, as many of you know, comes from the use that ladies, especially in Italy, made of the plant. The juice of the plant, which contains atropine, was dissolved in water and placed in the eyes to dilate the pupils, making the eyes larger and more lustrous, and the person sexually irresistible. Clearly, this plant would have a use in love spells, but great care must be taken. As the Wicked Witch of the West so aptly put it, "These matters must be handled delicately." Another legend says that the name *Belladonna* refers to the belief that the plant is the manifestation of a fatal enchantress.

Other common names were Sorcerer's Cherry, Witch's Berry, Murderer's Berry and Dwaleberry. Dwale is Old Norse for trance.

From the descriptions in classical writings, it is thought that the Maenads, followers of Dionysius, drank a little more than just wine before the commencement of their orgiastic ceremonies. I previously reported that *Datura* may have been one of the ingredients, but from the descriptions of the eyes of the celebrants as flaming and dilated, *Belladonna* may have been another ingredient. What a hangover these ladies must have had!

In Bohemia, the plant is said to be under the dominion of the devil, who watches over it. He may, however, be lured from the plant on a certain night of the year (not said which

one) by releasing a black hen, which the devil will then chase.

The plant is also under the dominion of Hecate, about whom was said that she knows the names of all the herbs and teaches all their special qualities to her daughters. The herb is a perennial plant that grows about three feet tall with brownish purple bell-shaped flowers. The berries of the plant are black and shiny and have a very sweet taste. Unfortunately, this makes them attractive to children and resultant poisonings have occurred. The main poisonous alkaloid is hyoscyamine, with traces of atropine and scopolamine. The symptoms of mild cases of intoxication are high spirits and a feeling of timelessness, with the subsequent slumber often producing highly erotic dreams.

Fatal poisonings occur because the breakdown of the poison in the system takes a very long time, unlike Aconite, so it is difficult to keep the patients' respiration going. Gerard, the great herbalist, says of the plant, "If you will follow my council, deal not with the same in any case, and banish it from your gardens, and the use of it also, being a plant so furious and deadly; for it bringeth such as have eaten thereof into a dead sleep, wherein many have died."

For the village wisewoman, who knew the exact dosages for all the plants in her repertory of spells, Belladonna was an important ingredient, but for the assortment of witches that we know and love, and who may not be skilled in such matters, Gerard's advice is well taken seriously.

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Or The Curious Lore and Magical Property of Plants
By Diane Fenster
Yule 1988: Henbane
[deja vu all over again--vw]

The Goddess Must have Something in Mind but I can't Figure it out Dept.
So here I sit with the post-election pre-inquisition blues again mama, just trying to make sense of the universe and why George Bush (or George Shrub as my friend Bruce calls him) is now prez. Well, just remember "The White House is a Crack House." (Credit for that one goes to the other Dharma Dumpling in my life, Miles).

The Compost Coven "Thirteen Years of a Good Thing" Reunion took place on October 23 at my house. In attendance were all the original members that could be found; Starhawk, Jo, Amber, Beth Thundermeadow, Marv, Arden and yours truly plus Valerie as first of the next generation. Everyone kissed and made up for the animosities that had developed before the group broke up, which was what I'd hoped for. I must say that the Compost Coven is still HOT SHIT and we can still raise a mean cone of power.

I finally made it to a performance of the Spiral Dance at the Women's Building on October 29. (I tried to go to the first one in 1979 at Fort Mason but got there late and was told no room at the inn.) My favorite part of this ritual was when Baron Samedi nearly caught the whole place on fire in a fit of overzealous flame charging.

Going to group rituals like the Spiral Dance brings to mind some thoughts on the subject of what it means to be a witch. People frequently ask me this question and I find that my answer has evolved as my understanding of the Craft and of my own inner being has deepened. For me, the process of becoming a witch is a symbolic journey of Self-discovery (the Self in a Jungian sense of the guiding center of the psyche). When starting out on that journey, group ritual is often the first step in establishing a connection to the Craft. This is an important beginning experience however, since it opens ones' eyes to the Goddess and all her possibilities. One's spirituality at this stage is involved in a type of participation mystique¹, a means of creating an identity through the group experience. But as one moves further along, there comes a point where a connection must be found to one's own inner guides so that a unique brand of

spirituality is created by each individual. There are no hard and fast rules.

Each person must learn to listen to their own voice and develop the confidence to act on what they feel inside. No one can give this voice to you, you must find it for yourself with a lot of soul-searching and hard work. That is why I object to people like Lynne Andrews advertising to initiate people into her "shamanic tradition" for \$325. Money doesn't buy magical connections.

The finding of one's voice is a difficult task for a great many people in this culture with its prevalent patriarchal religions which do not recognize the value of individual experience, especially feminine experience. That is why so many people seem to be seduced into believing the connections can be given to or bought by them. But our inner beings are crying out for just this sort of connection to the Self. Witness the wholesale alienation that is manifest in the products of our society.

Sibylle Birkhauser writes in relation to Jungian processes which to me are very akin to the workings of Craft, both stemming from the same source, the unconscious: "... for the human need for meaning and spiritual orientation is so deep-rooted that it is impossible to do without them for long. This is a major problem for many people: they have to find the way toward their own helpful ideas. Religion could help one here, but many people today can no longer accept traditional religious ideas; they must take a different way from that of simple belief in order to reach the source, where religious images and ideas actually originated. They must find a way of approaching the unconscious, for that is where spiritual images, and not only the drives, are rooted."²

That is the appeal of the Craft to me. It is a Cauldron of Inspiration and Regeneration where one can find a personal meaning to life and death. The Craft is in a sense a religion of Solitaries even if one is working within a coven. Individual inspiration should be encouraged since the Goddess and the God reside in each of us.

So come together and celebrate "all acts of love and pleasure" for they are the rituals of the Goddess, but remember that the creation of one's own personal witchcraft, magical development and relation to the Goddess is just as important a ritual as celebrating with a group.

HENBANE

Henbane, *Hyoscyamus niger*, is what I have in store for you this month. It is another plant in the Solanaceae family, along with potatoes, tomatoes, mandrake, belladonna and datura.

The generic name is a variation on the Ancient Greek *hyoskyamos*, which means pig bean. The German herbalist Otho Brunfels (1488-1534) believed that the name refers to the fact that pigs get cramps if they eat Henbane. But in Greece the folklore holds that the name is derived from the episode in the *Odyssey* where Circe turned Odysseus' men into pigs. It is believed that she used a magical potion containing Henbane to achieve those results. Homer does not actually state that Henbane was the active

ingredient but only that Circe's drink contained "the juice of magical herbs". Yet it is interesting to note that this herb contains alkaloids that can produce the sensation of having been turned into an animal. There's room here for speculation on the origins of shape-shifting amongst shamans and witches. Perhaps Henbane was used to intensify the natural identification with the animals.

Henbane was also known as *Herba Appolinaris* in ancient times, connecting it with the sun god Apollo. Perhaps the priestesses of the Delphic Oracle prophesied under the influence of the burning vapors of the plant. The plant is also associated with Belenus, the Celtic Sun God.

It is known as *belene* or *belune* in Anglo Saxon, *bilse* in German, *belisa* in Old High German, *bielun* in Polish, *belend* in Hungarian and *belena* in Russian. All these words being derived from the same source and in the Celtic language it was known as *belinuntia*. So here we have a tantalizing connection between Belenus and Apollo, both solar deities, and the Henbane herb that was associated with both of them. The priestesses of Belenus may also have used Henbane in their rituals. Belenus (or Belinus), the God of Light, had a dark double or twin known as Bran, the God of the Underworld in Celtic mythology, who alternately conquered and was conquered by him.

This theme, which runs through the mythology of many cultures, represents the alternation of night and day or winter and summer. The old king is killed by his young successor but is reborn again. What this all means is that there also seems to be a connection between Henbane and the Winter Solstice, it being the time of the birth of the Sun. Since this is the Winter Solstice issue, synchronicity is at work once again.

Tracing the etymology back even further, we find *Belili*, *Belit*, *Beltis* and *Baalith* as names for the Great Goddess from the area of Syria, Canaan and the Nile delta. How can we connect all these threads together? Robert Graves in *The White Goddess* tells us that in Athens, at the Winter Solstice, there was a festival called the *Lenaea* (festival of Wild Women) where the death and rebirth of Dionysus was re-enacted using a yearling kid to represent the young God. In the original myth, nine wild women, the representatives of the moon goddess Hera, tore the child to pieces and ate him.

But this myth of death and rebirth goes back even further. Graves also tells of an Aurignacian cave painting depicting a version of the *Lenaea* which shows nine women surrounding a young male figure (Dionysus) who had huge genitals. The women represent the New, Old and Full Moon triads. I speculate that Henbane was used in these rituals, first being associated with the wild Goddess who came to be known as *Belili*, then as religious emphasis shifted to the male God, the plant became associated with Belenus. Remember that Henbane causes a sensation of being turned into an animal. Why not a wild ferocious animal, capable of tearing the God apart so that he may be reborn?

Another possible weaving of this story may deal with Henbane's traditional use as a pain-killing drug for those victims due to be tortured and executed. Perhaps the god

Belenus or his earthly representative in the Lenaea was given a narcotic drink laced with Henbane to numb him to the pain of dismemberment, and so the two became associated with each other.

It is also said that Henbane was used to crown the dead as they wandered hopelessly by the river Styx.

Henbane also has the capacity to bring oblivion or the feeling that anything that has happened or may happen is of no importance. One sinister use for this is reported by the Anti-Slavery Society (an organization for the prevention of white slave trade) which states that narcotics containing hyoscyamine, a derivative of Henbane, are used by slave traders.

Culpepper says that some astrologers call Henbane an herb of Jupiter, but he disagrees with this and states that he proves it by an argument. He reasons that the herbs that delight to grow in Saturnine places are Saturnine herbs hence Henbane, which delights to grow in ditches and near places where they empty the common urinals, is an Herb of Saturn.

Gerard states that:

"The leaves, the seeds and the juice when taken internally cause an unquiet sleep, like unto the sleep of drunkenness, which continueth long and is deadly to the patient. To wash the feet in a decoction of Henbane, as also the often smelling of the flowers causeth sleep."

The leaves and roots if eaten produce maniacal delirium. Even the odor of the fresh leaves can produce giddiness and stupor. Culpepper tells us that:

"The remedy to help those that have taken Henbane is to drink goat's milk, honeyed water or pine kernels, with sweet wine; or, in the absence of these, fennel seed, nettle seed, the seed of cresses, mustard or radish; as also onions or garlic taken in wine, do all help to free them from danger and restore them to their due temper again."

This will be the last plant of this series on the dark herbs that go into flying ointment. It seems fitting that it being the Winter Solstice, we move to lighter things as we welcome the return of the newborn Sun.

1 A state of unconscious identification with the gods. It is a term taken from the anthropologist Luden Levy-Bruhl. C.G. Jung defines it further by saying that: 'It denotes a peculiar kind of psychological connection... in which the subject cannot clearly distinguish himself from the object but is bound to it by a direct relationship which amounts to partial identity.' (Psychological Types, Collected Works 6) 2 Sibylle Birkhauser, *The Mother* (Toronto, Inner City Books, 1988)

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Diane
The Prime Mover of the Universe

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Notes from Diane's Garden
Or The Curious Lore and Magical Property of Plants
By Diane Fenster

Brigid 1989: Blackberry

Since this article has to do with Brigid, the patron of poets and poetic inspiration, I dedicate the writings to Karen Lawson, wisewoman, teacher, friend and a source of inspiration in my life.

Leaving behind the baneful herbs of the dark time, we move on into the light of Brigid, the triple goddess of healing, poetry and smithcraft. Since the garden at Mount Bubba is amply supplied with bramble patches, I shall certainly make use of them for my Brigid ritual. Might I suggest that you, dear reader, do the same next year.

As I have told you, Brigid, also known as Candlemas, is the day that the sun comes out from behind the shadow of Mount Bubba so my house receives more light. I celebrate this day by filling the house with candles and welcoming the return of the sun. According to Robert Graves in *The White Goddess*, the Bramble or Blackberry is sacred to the Brigid triad of Goddesses so this month's notes will show us the folklore behind this plant. For more information on the history and symbolism of Brigid, both as a Goddess and a Saint, I refer you to Barbara Walker's *Women's Encyclopedia of Myths and Secrets*.

Rubus fruticosus is the Latin name, *rubus* meaning red. The brambles are in the same family as roses and apples. The name bramble is derived from *brambel* or *brymbyl*, meaning prickly. Culpepper tells us that it is a plant of Venus in Aries and the leaves of the plant should be gathered in the hour of the planet that governs the plant in question.

Blackberries are supposed to give protection against evil runes. The whole plant has a great history of use as a charm because it was a symbol of the triple Goddess and for medicinal purposes.

There is a custom against eating blackberries in Cornwall since the plant is sacred to Brigid. In many other rural English areas, there is also a taboo against the Blackberry because the plant is associated with Satan. It is said that Satan was cast out of heaven

on Old Michaelmas Day, October 11. Blackberries could not be gathered or eaten after that date, since they had been spit upon by the Devil when he fell into a patch of brambles and would be poisonous or bitter.

The following spell for burns and scalds makes use of the Blackberry. Since Brigid is the Goddess of Smithcraft, a profession which was filled with danger from burns, it makes sense that a charm for healing would make use of her sacred plant. It is interesting to note the two different wordings from different sources (The White Goddess and The Encyclopedia of Superstitions). For the first spell, the directions are to take nine bramble leaves and float them in a basin of water from a pure spring. Each leaf was then applied to the affected area and the invocation was repeated three times for each leaf. For the second spell, one is directed to use holy water to float the nine bramble leaves in, and to pass each leaf over and then away from the injured area while repeating the invocation three times.

Three ladies came from the East,
One with fire and two with frost.
Out with thee fire, and in with thee frost.
--A Cornish invocation to Brigid as a charm against scalds

There came three angels out of the east,
One brought fire and two brought frost.
Out fire, and in frost,
In the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.
--The same invocation showing the influence of the Church

There are a whole series of ancient beliefs regarding the efficacy of being passed through a naturally-occurring archway of either stone or plant material. It is symbolic of a rebirth, passing through the yoni of the Great Mother, represented by the archway. The following bramble-cure, which makes use of the growth habit of the plant to root at the tip of the branch when it reaches enough of a length and weight to touch the ground, is part of that series. The resultant archway acts as a magical doorway through which people (mostly children) and animals are passed through in order to cure various ailments such as boils, hernias, rickets, skin troubles, and whooping cough. In the case of cows, it is to cure Shrew-Mouse Evil, the malady (paralysis) that supposedly results from the animal being walked over by a shrew-mouse.

The root and the leaves contain a high proportion of tannin, so the plant is much used as an astringent and a tonic. The flowers and fruit were thought to be a cure for venomous snakebites and the young shoots, eaten in a salad, were supposed to fasten loose teeth. Crusoe's Treasury of Easy Medicines from 1771 recommends a decoction of Blackberry leaves to be applied to long-standing skin ulcers.

There was even a hair dye made from boiling blackberry leaves and lye together, then applying it to the hair. It gives the hair a permanent soft black color. Blackberry juice gives us a grey dye on wool and slate blue on silk. The new shoots give a black dye.

The London Pharmacopoeia of 1696 proclaimed that the ripe berries were a superior cordial and were restorative in nature. Personally, I am extremely fond of Blackberries and one of my sweet memories is of a berry gathering expedition with my cousin through the fields of North Carolina on a beautiful summer day.

Mrs. Grieve in A Modern Herbal has this recipe for a cordial that should restore one's spirits:

Press out the juice of ripe Blackberries, adding two pounds of sugar to each quart of juice. Add 1/ 2 oz. of nutmegs and cloves. Boil all together for a short time, allow to get cold and then add a little brandy.

A bit sweet for my taste, but as a ritual toast to Brigid on her day, well, that's another story.

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Notes from Diane's Garden
Or The Curious Lore and Magical Property of Plants
By Diane Fenster

Beltaine 1989: Willow

In keeping with the symbolism of the Weeping Willow, this article is dedicated to the memory of Abbie Hoffman, Yippie crazyman who took Chicago and the Stock Exchange by storm and who didn't let go of his ideals even at 52 when his spirit left us to cycle round again. You'll be missed, Abbie, there aren't many left like you.

WILLOW

One of the greatest gifts of the Goddess that comes from healing plants is the preparation made from the bark of the Willow tree, known to the witches as one of the oldest sources of pain relief and still one of the best. It was appropriated by the physicians when they took over the art of curing from the local herb women. We know this preparation as aspirin (acetylsalicylic acid, salic coming from Salix, the Willow).

The bark of the willow is sovereign against rheumatic cramps formerly thought to be caused by witchcraft.

The Goddess's prime orgiastic bird, the wrvneck, or snake bird, or cuckoo's mateła Spring migrant which hisses like a snake, lies flat along a bough, erects its crest when angry, writhes its neck about, lays white eggs, eats ants, and has markings on its feathers like those on the scales of oracular serpents in Ancient Greece; always nests in willow-trees.

Moreover, the lyknos, or basket-sieve anciently used for winnowing corn, was made from willow; it was in winnowing sieves of this sort, 'riddles', that the North Berwick witches confessed to King James I that they went to sea on their witches' sabbaths.

A famous Greek picture by Polygnotus at Delphi represented Orpheus as receiving the gift of mystic eloquence by touching willow-trees in a grove of Persephone; compare the injunction in The Song of the Forest Trees: 'Burn not the willow, a tree sacred to poets.'

The willow is the tree of enchantment and is the fifth tree of the year; five (V) was the number sacred to the Roman Moon-goddess Minerva. The month extends from April 15th to May 12th, and May Day, famous for its orgiastic revels and its magic dew, falls in the middle. It is possible that the carrying of willow-branches on Palm Sunday, a variable feast which usually falls early in April, is a custom that properly belongs to the beginning of the willow month.

Willow is taken from the Old English words wilig, welige and withig, all which indicate a plant suitable for withes or ties, the twigs of the malleable willow being used in basketwork and wickerwork. Salix is the generic name for the many varieties of Willow. The word is thought to be derived from the Celtic sal and lis meaning near water.

It is interesting to note the contrast that exists amongst the symbolisms of the Willow. First we find as said previously, that the tree is sacred to the month of May, a time of joyous abandon and fertility rituals as the earth clothes herself in green finery. Yet the Willow is the sad and weeping tree, sacred to Circe, Persephone and Hecate. In the Language of Flowers, it symbolizes celibacy and forsaken love, the Weeping Willow symbolizing sadness and mourning. The Jews hung their harps upon the branches of the Willow tree when they were in exile from Jerusalem. "By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down, yea, we wept, when we remembered Zion. We hanged our harps upon the willows in the midst thereof" (Psalm 137:1-2). I think that in this contrast we find an example of the pagan understanding of the bittersweet nature of the wheel of life. Even in the most fertile of times, death lies in wait, and from death comes new life.

Forsaken lovers wear a Willow garland as a symbol of their grief. For those who are in mourning, the Willow would be an appropriate plant to carry, or to place upon the altar. Willow baskets could be used to carry offerings to the dead.

"When once the lover's rose is dead,
Or laid aside forlorn,

Then willow-garlands 'bout the head
Bedewed with tears are worn"
--Herrick

On the side of fertility, Willow water (water that has had willow twigs soaking in it) has amazing growth capabilities. It's well documented that soaking cuttings of plants such as roses in willow water before setting them out to root will greatly increase the chances of the cutting's success. Herbalists also recommend willow water as a hair rinse to treat dandruff.

Children or cows should not be beaten with a Willow stick since the plant decays early. In some parts of England, it is unlucky to bring a branch of Willow into the house, elsewhere a branch of Willow placed by the bedside was thought to have a cooling effect on a person who has a fever.

In Bohemia the superstition says that Judas hanged himself on a willow tree, and the Devil has given the tree an attraction to suicides. Willow is another one of the trees that was used in that magical healing ritual we've encountered of passing a child between the split halves of the tree.

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Notes from Diane's Garden

Or The Curious Lore and Magical Property of Plants

By Diane Fenster

Eostre 1989: Oak

Abraham met the angel of God under an Oak, sacrifices to Baal were conducted under it, the Dodona oracle of Zeus was found in an Oak grove, it was sacred to the Dagda, high god of the early Irish and of course most of us are familiar with the Oak's relation to the Druids. The tree was duir (D) in the Druidic alphabet and was a representation of power. (See Graves' White Goddess, pgs.176-179, for a detailed excursion into the symbolism of the Oak). Druidic sacrificial victims were said to be crowned with Oak leaves and the sacrificial fires were of Oak logs. So sacred is this tree that felling it is

thought to bring death. If the tree was cut down, it was thought to utter a shriek or a groan.

The sacred grove of Diana at Nemi, made famous by Frazer in the Golden Bough, was a grove of Oak trees. Here the King and his tanist fought to the death for the privilege of being ritually united with the Goddess.

The Oak is also related to thunder and was dedicated to Thor in Scandanavian mythology. To the Romans, the Oak was sacred to Jupiter, because it sheltered him at the time of his birth and so it was thought that the tree could not be struck by lightning. This belief comes down to us in an English folk saying:
Strike Elm, strike Rowan, Not the Oak.

In Iceland, Oak pillars were erected to Thunor (another form of Thor). These pillars often stood outside temples and I suspect were later brought inside temples as the axis pole or connector between heaven and earth, and later developed into those columns in the Gothic cathedrals that I spoke of earlier. These tree poles would have acted as something like a natural lightning rod for the divine energies to travel back and forth between the dark womb of the Goddess and the bright sky of the God. We find this imagery once again in Voudon, where trees are the great highways of the comings and goings of the loa. The center post or poteau-mitan of the hounfor or temple is a stylized tree, and the loa descends into the hounfor along this post.

There is a tradition in Westphalia that states that the Wandering Jew will be able to come to rest when he finds two Oaks growing together in the form of a cross. Tradition has it that the cross of the crucifixion was made of Oak. In Ireland there was said to be a famous Oak tree which was under the protection of Saint Colman. A fragment of this tree, if kept in the mouth, would ward off death by hanging.

The Oak tree plays a part in weather charms and oracles as well. Farmers say that many acorns foretell a hard winter. Watching the Oak tree and the Ash to see which comes into leaf first in the spring gives us the saying:
Oak before Ash, only a splash;
Ash before Oak, only a soak.

An early method of divination was to listen to the sounds of the rustlings of the leaves of the Oak. Haven't you ever stood under the boughs of a tree and listened to its whisperings? It is an ancient language, next oldest to the language of stones and mountains, and speaks to us of times long ago. Oak, ash and thorn are called the fairy triad, because if you find the three growing together, you'll be able to see the wee folk. In northern mythology, Fairyland gathers around the roots of the Oak. The Oak is thought to be a guardian tree and it's good luck to have one growing next to your house. Grimm tells us that there is a relationship between elves and Oaks and that the holes found in the trees are used as a sort of thruway for the fairies. There is a similar belief in India where the tree spirits or dryads make use of the holes.

The symbolism of the treehole as yoni, entrance to the womb of the Goddess, and a place of healing, is brought into play with the Oak, just as we saw in the arch of the blackberry branch. Remnants of this belief are found in folk superstitions which claim that you can heal various complaints by putting the hands or the feet in contact with these tree holes. There was a charm for curing gout by taking nail clippings and hair from the afflicted leg, placing them in the treehole and closing the hole with cow dung. Within three months, the cure was made.

Another charm using the Oak is for a toothache. One bores into the tooth with a nail until it bleeds (a bit severe) and then drives the nail into an Oak, using the side of the tree where the sun does not shine. When the nail rusts, the pain will cease. That's a bit of a long wait so I'm surprised this remained as a charm.

Acorns have also been used as healing charms. Try carrying one in your pocket. It's supposed to bring health and well being. The acorns from the trees that marked parish boundaries were thought to be most effective (Oak trees were used to mark parish boundaries in rural England and the villagers made a procession round the outskirts every year reciting the gospels as they went. This festival of "beating the parish bounds" was supposed to have come down to us from a feast to the god Terminus).

In Berkhamstead, England, there was an Oak that grew near a crossroads (a very magical place indeed, being the haunt of Hecate and Papa Legba) known as the Cross Oak. People suffering from ague would pin a lock of hair to the tree and pull away with a jerk, leaving the hair (and hopefully the ague) still attached to the tree.

The bark of the tree is the part used by herbalists for its astringent effects. It is used in the treatment of agues and hemorrhages and can be substituted for quinine when treating intermittent fevers. When used for this reason, it is given with chamomile flowers. A decoction of one oz. of bark in a quart of water is a useful gargle for chronic sore throats. It can be applied locally to bleeding gums and piles.

The skin of the acorn was thought to be useful in staying the spitting of blood. A powder of acorns mixed with wine was used as a diuretic. Acorns mixed with oak bark and milk was considered an antidote to poisonous herbs and medicines.

Due to the high concentration of tannin, the bark of the tree is used to tan leather. When mixed with copperas, it yields a dye which colors woolens a dull purple.

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Diane
The Prime Mover of the Universe

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Notes from Diane's Garden
Or The Curious Lore and Magical Property of Plants
By Diane Fenster

Lammas 1989: Ash

Greetings my pretties, I'm back from vacation and ready to roll once again. Let's take up where we left off in the tree series and weave a tale of the Ash.

ASH

Burn Ashwood green,
Tis fire for a queen;
Burn Ashwood sear,
'Twill make a man swear.
--Old English rhyme

Known as Fraxinus excelsior from the Latin frango, meaning I break. This refers to the bark, which is easily split. It is ruled by the Sun. It is sacred to Poseidon, and as Yggdrasil, the World Tree, sacred to Odin, and before either of them, to the triple Goddess as represented by the three Norns of Scandinavian mythology, who dispensed justice under its branches.

Yggdrasil, the World Ash Tree had three roots. One stretched to the realm of the Norns, or Fates, one went to the well of Mimir in the land of the Frost Giants. This well was a source of wisdom and Odin sacrificed the sight of one of his eyes to obtain a drink of the water. In Cornwall, it was said that one could summon Odin by holding branches of Ash, oak and thorn. A secret phrase was uttered. This could only be taught by a woman to a man or a man to a woman.

The third root traveled to the realm of the Goddess Hel, ruler of Niflheim, the underworld. The magic of the runes was one of the secrets that she guarded. In the druidic tree alphabet, N or Nion, the Ash, meant knowledge.

Odin, in his shamanic aspect, hung from the World Tree Yggdrasil for nine nights as a sacrifice to himself. During this time, he gained wisdom and was transformed into a master of magic. Here we can see a relationship to Christ and the cross, the initiatory ordeal bringing about a metamorphosis.

Witches' broomsticks are made of Ash to protect the rider from drowning. But beware if you are separated from your stick. You can be thrown in the water to see if you'll sink or swim.

As we've seen before, our ancestors looked to the growth habits of plants for different types of divination and weather-workings. Here's another rhyme that predicts what the summer weather has in store by which tree leafs out first in the spring;

If the Oak is out before the Ash
'Then you may expect a splash;
But if the Ash is before the Oak,
Then you must beware a soak.

Good luck charms often take the form of plants, like the four leafed clover we all know so well. But Ash leaves are also lucky as the following couplet shows us;

With a four-leaved clover, a double leaved ash,
and a green-topped seave (rush),
You may go before the queen's daughter
without asking leave.

or from Cornwall:

Even Ash I thee do pluck,
Hoping thus to meet good luck;
If no luck I get from thee,
I shall wish thee on a tree.

There are many beliefs and superstitions regarding the Ash. This is an indication of how sacred it is and because of this it is also used for protection. Honey from the Ash tree was the first food given to newborns in some parts of Europe, and in Scotland, a green Ash stick was burnt at one end so that sap oozed out the other. This sap was then given to the newborn. We also find it being used as a protection against snakes and vipers. If a circle was traced around a sleeping viper using a rod of Ash wood, the viper could not move outside the circle. Peasants protected their babies from snakes while working in the fields by hanging their cradles from the branches of the Ash. In Scotland, a sprig of ash is placed over the bed to protect the occupants. The tree was also planted around the home as a safeguard.

There are tales told in several cultures of races of men being made from the wood of the Ash. Zeus made a race of "terrible and pugnacious" men from this wood. The prose Edda tells us that three sons of the giant, Odin being the eldest of the three, made the first man, Ask, from a block of Ash found by the sea. The Vikings came to be known as "Ashmen"; their spear shafts, axe handles and often their ships were made out of Ash as a protection against drowning, just like the witch's broomstick.

These majestic trees inspired great awe in our ancestors. It seems that a great deal of the symbolism and mystery of the Ash stems from the growth habits of the tree itself. The trunk of the tree can become knotted and twisted as it struggles to survive the harsh winters of the northern climates. It can grow on higher ground and more northern latitudes than many other trees. Areas of England that were ancient Saxon strongholds are often marked by a group of knotted old Ash trees.

In Devon and Somerset, the Yule Log, symbol of the returning light after the Winter Solstice, is traditionally made of Ash bound with nine withes and lit from charred twigs from last years' fire.

The Ash figures strongly in old curative rituals and spells. Curing thrush (a mouth disease) required the finding of an Ash growing beside running water. A thread was tied round one of its twigs with thee knots. For two more days, three more knots were tied each day then the string was passed through the child's mouth.

Once again we find a cure involving a split or hole in the tree. A cure for hernia or rickets has a child being passed through a split in an Ash sapling. Whooping cough was treated by pinning a lock of hair to the tree. Warts were cured by the parents by pressing a new pin into the bark of the Ash then into the wart until pain was felt, then back into the tree. A less painful method involved crossing the wart with a new pin three times and chanting

Ashen tree, Ashen tree,
Pray buy this wart off me.

Then the pin is stuck in the tree and the wart is supposed to grow on the tree instead of you. April and May were considered the best months for trying to cure children's warts. Even cattle diseases were treated with the Ash. Mice and shrews were entombed in holes in the tree. When they died, the cattle were cured.

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GIFs of the Goddess

a tale of enthusiasm

by Valerie Walker

It's 1974 in San Francisco, the San Francisco of "Tales of the City." I've landed here, escaping from mundane ol' Chicago and the MidWestern ambiance which led so many hostile people during the late Sixties to ask if I was a boy or a girl, even when it was perfectly obvious that I was a curly-haired feminist cutie in bib overalls. Oh, pooh to all that, I think. I want to go where people won't judge me by my appearance. I want to go where people are spiritual and free. So I come to San Francisco.

1975: And promptly fall into the Craft. Finally. After all those years of reading about Witches, of poring over "The White Goddess", I'm finally hanging out with the famous Starhawk, and even invited to join her coven, Compost. Wow. I'm really stoked.

I plunge deeply into studying as much of the Craft as I can pick up at the local used bookstore, from Xeroxed and re-Xeroxed fragments of Craften lore, from anyone who seems to have a clue. I pick out my Magickal name. I consecrate my tools. I take my White Cord initiation. I learn the language of the Craft: deosil, Samhain, astral, handfasting... Learning the Craft is more than a hobby, it's an obsession. I am like a goldfish with its eyes and mouth wide open, seeking out crumbs of Witchfood to swallow. I am on constant alert for Magickal implements to decorate my altar. I worship at the Shrine of Our Lady of Unlimited Possibilities. I'm on a mission from the Goddess!

1976: I'm a little disillusioned. There are more and more books coming out on the Craft, and they all seem to be copied from each other, and none of them is telling me anything I don't already know. So I start looking to mythology, read lots of Joseph Campbell, learn about the Eleusinian Mysteries, figure out correspondences on four, on five, on seven. Write a lot of simple rituals. Grow my own. It should be easier to get started in the Craft, I think. More organized. Somebody should start a Witch college. Hey, I have my Red Cord....why not me?

1977-81: Compost College is in full swing. Public rituals in Golden Gate Park, booths at the Haight Street Fair, open Magickal workshops for making mojos, masks, hex spells, candles. Visits to schools on Halloween to clue the kids in about Witches. Performing same-sex weddings. Incorporating as a non-profit corporation. I am passing so many students through that I can't even remember all their names. They are like goldfish with their eyes and mouths wide open, seeking out crumbs of knowledge to swallow. I do my best. Some stay, some don't. But some will start their own covens, which will last for years and years. Teaching the Craft is more than a hobby, it's an obsession. I worship at the Shrine of Our Lady of Spreading the News. I'm on a mission from the Goddess!

Somewhere in this segment of time, I serve as First Officer of CoG. For my sins. Politics, Witch Wars--not a pretty sight. I decide that I'd better go back to being a private citizen instead of a Public Witch. But we have a cute little newsletter, and I'll keep doing that.

1982-5: I'm living in the Napa Valley, being mostly Solitary, but coming down to SF to meet with Compost Coven periodically, and joining the occasional country Pagan for rituals. Boy, I hate this rural life.

In 1986 I move back (with great relief) to SF. Somebody asks me "What was your favorite wine in the Napa Valley?" My reply: "I wanna move back to San Franciiiiisco!!" Compost is in relative disarray, but still an entity in the Real World. I re-start the newsletter. It starts to take up more and more of my time.

1987-92: The Compost NewsLetter grows, changes, transmogrifies, evolves from a simple Witch coven calendar into a LitZine with a life of its own. The coven hardly ever meets at all. What is this all about? CNL is fun, but is it the Craft? It's more than a hobby, it's an obsession. I worship at the Shrine of Our Lady of Perfect Page Layout.

1993: I finally get a modem for my Mac, and I join CompuServe. All these entities all over the planet, in communication...this is like living on the Astral Plane.....Oh wow, this is cool, I think, and plunge into forum life: Religion forum has real Virtual Witches, trading long long postings about Craften minutiae. Libraries have papers I can download. Learning CompuServe is more than a hobby, it's an obsession. I am like a goldfish with its eyes and mouth wide open, seeking out crumbs of data to swallow. I am on constant alert for cool forums to visit. I learn the language of the Net: ROFLMAO, IMHO, , :).... And there are even virtual rituals I can attend. Not all that big a thrill, but other people report having tears in their eyes. Hmm.

1994, and I'm burnt out on CompuServe. This is lame, I think. Text-only, no pictures, and they charge me astronomical amounts for access. Screw this, I'm gonna get a direct Internet service provider. My friend Dr. Don the magician-turned-Spiritualist minister recommends San Francisco Online, and it looks good. \$180 a year, unlimited access time, and if I pay up front, no setup charges. And I can pick a name instead of having a number which I can't remember. Just like picking a Magickal name. Cool.

1995: wholebody@sfo.com has been surfing the Web for a while, joining lists and quitting them, realizing that they bring too much e-mail and too many arguments. Funny the things people can flame each other over. How fast one is supposed to execute the lat pulldown to the front. What constitutes an officially-certified herbalist. Who played Bunthorne in a particular performance of "Patience". The meaning of a song in Latin played in one episode of Babylon 5. It occurs to me then that the ListWars are very familiar. What was that they remind me of?.....oh, yes.

1996: CNL is finally off my hands. Whew. Peter Mooney has taken it over. Now let him run with it. When mail comes, I just put his address on the outside of the envelope, and drop it in the mailbox. Sigh of relief. I was really getting tired of print.

...I want to build a Website of my own. Gee, that means learning HTML. I wonder if it's really difficult...

December 26, 1996: Ron sits me down and gives me a half-hour lesson in HTML. I don't surface again until my vacation is over and it's time to go back to work on January 2. The first version of the Website goes up to the server on New Years Day, just for the symbolism. It's pretty crude, but I'm pleased. It's divided into four segments: FitnessWorlds, for my professional life; Funworlds (fun links and other time-wastage); OtherWorlds (sci-fi and fantasy); and WitchWorlds. Mustn't forget WitchWorlds.

February 1997. The Website has taken over my life. I'm learning the language of HTML: `<AHREF="http://www.sfo.com/~wholebody"> , <IMG SRC="eye6.gif" WIDTH="75" HEIGHT="50" BORDER="0" ALT="eye"> , </A>`. I have put the entire Compost Coven Disk of Shadows on the Web, and am well into the best of CNL. WitchWorlds has won two awards, Stairways Award and Pagan Best of the Web. Wow. I'm really stoked.

The Present: I've changed all the illustrations and backgrounds several times. I've registered my own domain name and now go by the handle of wiggage.com. I am like a goldfish with its eyes and mouth wide open, seeking out crumbs of Webfood to swallow. I am on constant alert for good sourcecode to download. I can't wait to get home from work every day and muck about with the site. I've taken online classes in JavaScript and Cascading Style Sheets, and now I can't wait to get into Flash. It's more than a hobby, it's an obsession. I worship at the Shrine of Our Lady of Infinite Bandwidth. I'm on a mission from the Goddess!

Deja vu, anyone?

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Page updated 01/01/2026

moi
In full Witchy regalia and feeling my oats.

<http://www.compostcoven.org/compost/charge.html>

26 captures

24 Apr 2001 - 31 Dec 2009

Jun AUG Oct

06

2003 2004 2006

About this capture

The Charge of the Goddess

traditional, reworked by Starhawk

Listen to the words of the Great Mother, who of old was called Artemis, Astarte, Dione, Melusine, Aphrodite, Ceridwen, Diana, Arianhrhod, Brigid, and many other names:

"Whenever you have need of anything, once in the month, and better it be when the moon is full, you shall assemble in some secret place and adore the spirit of Me who is Queen of all the Wise. You shall be free from slavery, and as a sign that you be free you shall be naked in your rites. Sing, feast, dance, make music and love, all in My presence, for Mine is the ecstasy of the spirit and Mine also is joy on earth. For my law is love unto all beings. Mine is the secret that opens upon the door of youth and Mine is the cup of wine of life that is the Cauldron of Ceridwen that is the holy grail of immortality. I give the knowledge of the spirit eternal and beyond death I give peace and freedom and reunion with those that have gone before. Nor do I demand aught of sacrifice, for behold, I am the mother of all things and My love is poured out upon the earth."

Hear the words of the Star Goddess, the dust of whose feet are the hosts of heaven, whose body encircles the universe:

"I who am the beauty of the green earth and the white moon among the stars and the mysteries of the waters, I call upon your soul to arise and come unto me. For I am the soul of nature that gives life to the universe. From me all things proceed and unto me they must return. Let my worship be in the heart that rejoices, for behold: all acts of love and pleasure are my rituals. Let there be beauty and strength, power and compassion, honor and humility, mirth and reverence within you. And you who seek to know me, know that your seeking and yearning will avail you not, unless you know the mystery: for if that which you seek, you find not within yourself, you will never find it without. For behold, I have been with you from the beginning, and I am that which is attained at the

end of desire."

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Page updated 01/01/2026

<http://www.compostcoven.org/compost/four.html>

33 captures

24 Apr 2001 - 28 May 2010

Jun AUG Oct

06

2003 2004 2006

[About this capture](#)

Correspondences on Four
DIRECTION

East

South

West

North

STONES

white opal, topaz

carnelian, Mexican opal, bloodstone, ruby

emerald, triplet opal, sapphire, aquamarine

moss agate, matrix opal

WOOD

ash, birch

pine, cedar

willow, alder

rowan, elder

OILS

sandalwood, lavender, cinnamon

bay, camomile, clove, patchouli

rosemary, myrrh, wintergreen

rose, orris, musk, mint, jasmine

SABBAT

Eostre

Litha

Mabon

Yule

SEASON

Spring

Summer

Autumn

Winter

ELEMENT

Air

Fire

Water

Earth

TOOL

Athame

Wand

Chalice

Pentacle

COLOR

Yellow

Red

Blue

Green

TIME

Dawn

Noon

Dusk

Midnight

BODYPART

Breath

Aura

Blood

Flesh & Bone

ANIMAL

Eagle

Lion

Serpent

Bull

ATTRIBUTE

Joy

Potency

Fertility

Safety

MENTAL

Intellect

Intuition

Emotion

Sensation

ALCHEMY

Evaporation

Combustion

Solutionr

Fixation

LIFESTAGE

Birth

Growth

Death

Decay

AGE

Childhood

Youth

Maturity

Old Age

WITCH POWER

Imagination

Will

Faith

Secrecy

PRIESTESS

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Page updated July 12 16:050

<http://www.compostcoven.org/compost/seven.html>

23 captures

26 Aug 2002 - 31 Dec 2009

Jun AUG Oct

10

2003 2004 2006

About this capture

Correspondences on Seven

HERBS FOR THE SEVEN PLANETS

(Note these are all edible herbs, but by no means a complete list.)

SUN: angelica, bay laurel, camomile, cinnamon, clove, rosemary, rue, saffron

MOON: bay laurel, ginseng, nutmeg, wintergreen

MARS: basil, cayenne, coriander, garlic, mustard

MERCURY: cinnamon, dill, fennel, fenugreek, mace, marjoram, parsley

JUPITER: anise seed, cloves, mace, mint, nutmeg, sage

VENUS: angelica, cardamom, marjoram, mint, pennyroyal, saffron, tarragon, thyme

SATURN: comfrey, hemp, rue, tarragon, thyme, wintergreen

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Page updated 01/01/2026

<http://www.wiggage.com/veedeck.html>

70 captures

14 Feb 2002 - 14 Mar 2022

Jun AUG Oct

25

2003 2004 2005

About this capture

A Book of Dreams with Pictures and Words

by Valerie Walker

©2001

This is not a standard Tarot deck, even though the first 22 cards are named after the Major Arcana of the Tarot. All 56 cards in this deck are major arcana; the images are meant to be ambiguous and the interpretations merely descriptive of one point of view. You are free to make up your own meanings for each card, which may shift from time to time depending on the surrounding cards in your layout. Another difference from the traditional Tarot deck is that there are no reversed-card meanings. Each card is what it is, which is what you say it is. Listen to the cards speak.

[pick a card](#)
[the cards](#)
[more cards](#)
[tarot links](#)
[other resources](#)

.

You need the Flash 5 player to see the animated display.

[download it](#)

Or if you'd rather just check out the cards individually, see below.

the cards:

The Fool The Magickian The High Priestess The Empress The Emperor
The Heirophant The Lovers The Chariot Strength The Hermit The
Wheel of Fortune Justice The Hanged Man Death Temperance The
Devil The Tower The Star The Moon The Sun Judgement The
World

[The World is the last of the traditional Tarot trumps. From here on, the journey is through uncharted territory.]

The Wounded Warrior Fnord Sex [The blank card] Melek Taus Sorrow
Pride The Gate The Flashlight Silence Kali Power Blessing
Passion The Black Heart of Innocence East/Air South/Fire West/Water
North/Earth 42/Self As Above, So Below Transmutation The Crone The
Prime Directive The Chaote/Coyote Which Hand? It's All Greek to Me
Erzulie-Freda The Altar Three Souls Fear Persephone/Lost The
Guides The Great Round

[top](#)

[more cards](#)

which are not part of the vee-deck, but might prove to be the beginnings of vee-deck mark two (a continuing process):

Hestia
Mr. Showbiz
Under Ground
City Lights

Santa Claus
The True Believer
Birds on the Wire
The Cards
top

tarot links

- dbZa's zee-tarot designs
- my zee-tarot designs

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- Tarot Fool
- Uncarrot Tarot

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- US Games

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- Epson Compatible Ink: source for ink
- Flax Art & Design : art supplies

other resources:

tombo studiosTombo Studios: Art and Adornment from the realm of Faery
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Free JavaScripts provided by The JavaScript Source

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<http://www.wiggage.com/images/VEE-DECKjpgs/fool.html>

18 captures

1 Mar 2002 - 21 Aug 2017

Jun AUG Oct
15
2003 2004 2008

About this capture

The Fool:

I'm nobody, who are you? I lead off the deck, but have no rank. I am a traveler, always seeking for...what? My question is always "what is the work of this god?" Life is a journey through layers of dream and reality. Am I dreaming? How conscious am I of reality?

THE DREAMER

back

<http://www.wiggage.com/images/VEE-DECKjpgs/magickian.html>

22 captures

18 Mar 2002 - 21 Aug 2017

Jun AUG Oct

18

2003 2004 2008

About this capture

The Magickian:

Quicker than the eye, I look out at you with a knowing smile. Spiral forces of magick emerge from the cup I hold. I know secrets I will never tell. At the same time, there is something of the Trickster about me. I am an artist, and the normal rules of life don't apply to me--and I'm a con-artist too, fooling the Fool. Sshh--don't tell.

SECRETS

back

<http://www.wiggage.com/images/VEE-DECKjpgs/priestess.html>

22 captures

18 Mar 2002 - 21 Aug 2017

Jun AUG Oct

18

2003 2004 2005

About this capture

The High Priestess:

Walking in beauty, I am committed to my path, and look down thoughtfully. Partially obscured by spiderwebs, I am emblematic of spiritual mysteries, of the sacred things which are to be taken very seriously. "Blessed are my feet that have brought me in these ways."

COMMITMENT

back

<http://www.wiggage.com/images/VEE-DECKjpgs/empress.html>

20 captures
8 Mar 2002 - 21 Aug 2017
May AUG Oct
03
2003 2004 2005

About this capture

The Empress:
Dressed as a little circus girl, I show my triple self as fun-loving Maiden. But the spiderweb in the background is evidence of deeper things, of the Crone who comprehends Mother and Maiden, who is ever young, ever renewed.
RENEWAL

back
<http://www.wiggage.com/images/VEE-DECKjpgs/emperor.html>
17 captures
15 Jun 2002 - 21 Aug 2017
May OCT Dec
15
2003 2004 2008

About this capture

The Emperor:
I am the strong man, no longer young but not yet aged. I am the man in the middle of my journey, firmly rooted in my beliefs and skills, with a bit of the cowboy about me, the masculine realm of football on weekends and working on the car, of family and home. I exemplify the masculine urge to explore, to make, to shape.

STABILITY
back
<http://www.wiggage.com/images/VEE-DECKjpgs/heirophant.html>
21 captures
13 Mar 2002 - 21 Aug 2017
Jun AUG Oct
15
2003 2004 2005

About this capture

The Heirophant:
I keep the beat going. I am in the act of doing what I love, inspiring and carrying the ritual along. I retain my self-possession in order to aid the worshipers to become possessed by the Loas, by things larger than life. I am the conduit of Power, completing the connection between the sacred and the everyday. All Props To The Drummer!

CONNECTION
back

<http://www.wiggage.com/images/VEE-DECKjpgs/lovers.html>

20 captures

13 Mar 2002 - 21 Aug 2017

Jun AUG Oct

18

2003 2004 2005

About this capture

The Lovers:

We stand by the sea at sunset, timeless. We could be from any period in history, because our story is ageless: two who love each other. Two women in this rendering, but in other times and places we have been two men or a man and a woman. Our love is the most remarkable thing about us.

LOVE

back

<http://www.wiggage.com/images/VEE-DECKjpgs/chariot.html>

19 captures

15 Oct 2002 - 21 Aug 2017

May OCT Feb

15

2003 2004 2008

About this capture

The Chariot:

I am a young man, playing an electric bass in front of three identical sports cars. Drivers wanted: I am the experienced driver, like the Heirophant, but mine is the beat of daily life. This is the rhythm of the mundane, which drives the dance of getting and spending and makes it prosper.

PROSPERITY

back

<http://www.wiggage.com/images/VEE-DECKjpgs/strength.html>

17 captures

19 Mar 2002 - 21 Aug 2017

Jun AUG Oct

22

2003 2004 2008

About this capture

Strength:

Playing with fire, I am a young woman juggling fire in the darkness. I illuminate the night with my daring. The light is not bright enough to see clearly, but seems to be a reminder of light. It takes a great amount of effort and concentration to spin the fire without getting burnt, but I can do it.

CONCENTRATION

back

<http://www.wiggage.com/images/VEE-DECKjpgs/hermit.html>

22 captures

13 Mar 2002 - 21 Aug 2017

May AUG Oct

15

2003 2004 2005

About this capture

The Hermit:

"If that which you seek you find not within you, you will never find it without." I am a solitary young woman: alone, but not lonely. Stars surround me, but I generate more light than they. I know that the answers to my questions lie in deep layers of my mind, and I concentrate on them.

SEARCH

back

<http://www.wiggage.com/images/VEE-DECKjpgs/wheel.html>

19 captures

20 Mar 2002 - 21 Aug 2017

May AUG Oct

22

2003 2004 2008

About this capture

The Wheel of Fortune:

I am a baby being held up against the background of a Ferris wheel. I am uncertain and slightly anxious, but the hands that hold me are strong. Still, no one can predict what will happen to me in my life. It's a puzzling world, and a lot depends on the luck of the draw.

LUCK

back

<http://www.wiggage.com/images/VEE-DECKjpgs/justice.html>

18 captures

17 Jun 2002 - 21 Aug 2017

Jun OCT Dec

15

2003 2004 2008

About this capture

Justice:

I am a young woman smiling out of the picture at you, surrounded by tattooed hands, set in a background of pink clouds. I have things well in hand, because other people have given me a hand. I can act from my heart because I know that help is at hand, and

even-handed justice comes most easily from a heart undisturbed by considerations of survival.

HELP

back

<http://www.wiggage.com/images/VEE-DECKjpgs/hanged.html>

20 captures

15 Jun 2002 - 21 Aug 2017

Jun AUG Oct

15

2003 2004 2008

About this capture

The Hanged Man:

I am an astronaut hanging upside down on a field of stars. Like Odin hanging from the World Tree, I am suspended between the worlds, neither here nor there, seeking wisdom, on a quest of exploration.

BETWEEN THE WORLDS

back

<http://www.wiggage.com/images/VEE-DECKjpgs/death.html>

15 captures

8 Mar 2002 - 21 Aug 2017

Dec MAY Dec

17

2003 2004 2008

About this capture

Death:

I am a beautiful woman who appears in negative, like a ghost. I am the memory of what once was and is no longer. The light blues and pinks of my picture are not grim and cheerless, but gentle and comforting, as if to hint that change might not be as frightening as you anticipate. Death and change are inevitable and natural, and "I am that which is attained at the end of desire."

CHANGE

back

<http://www.wiggage.com/images/VEE-DECKjpgs/temperance.html>

17 captures

20 Jun 2002 - 21 Aug 2017

Jun AUG Oct

22

2003 2004 2008

About this capture

Temperance:

I am a woman dressed in red and brown, standing before a rock wall and looking at the sunset. My gaze is calm and pure. I am satisfied to be who I am, where I am, in my eternal timeless present moment. I take strength from my ability to bring all my resources to bear on whatever the moment will bring, and I stay calm and ready to act.

PREPAREDNESS

back

<http://www.wiggage.com/images/VEE-DECKjpgs/devil.html>

19 captures

30 Apr 2002 - 21 Aug 2017

Jun OCT Dec

15

2003 2004 2008

About this capture

The Devil:

Pleased to meet you/Hope you know my name. A young man, I stand on a stage and look out at you, the audience, with a gleam in my eye and another in my hand. Before and below me is an 1860's-style hypodermic syringe set in a box, a Victorian-era heroin addict's "works." A third gleam, brightest of all, reflects off the heroin bottle. I seek fame , but my delusions will trip me up, and in fact are beginning to do so. I am already on the slippery slope of self-deception.

DELUSION

back

<http://www.wiggage.com/images/VEE-DECKjpgs/tower.html>

20 captures

20 Jun 2002 - 21 Aug 2017

Jun AUG Oct

22

2003 2004 2005

About this capture

The Tower:

I am the World Trade Center at dawn on September 11, 2001. I bear a target labeled "you are here". The planes are already on their way. There is little chance of escaping disaster.

THE INEVITABLE

back

<http://www.wiggage.com/images/VEE-DECKjpgs/star.html>

23 captures

19 Mar 2002 - 21 Aug 2017

Jun AUG Oct

18

2003 2004 2005

About this capture

The Star:

I am a woman in the sky, mingled with a nebula. I have come through disaster and been changed by it. This is not my human face, but the face of my soul. I breathe in the light of a billion stars, and breathe out victory. I am a survivor, but on a different level than "Justice"--I have survived spiritually.

SPIRIT

back

<http://www.wiggage.com/images/VEE-DECKjpgs/moon.html>

19 captures

23 Dec 2002 - 21 Aug 2017

Jun AUG Oct

18

2003 2004 2005

About this capture

The Moon:

A three-quarter moon, waxing toward full, appears behind a filmy spiderweb. I am the woman in the moon. The spiderweb indicates that the Crone is present, even though the phase of the moon is Maiden becoming Mother. All three of my aspects are at work. I am the Prime Mover of your dreams. I am the Muse of the artist. I call the soul to me even when the mind is fixed on other things. I am mysterious and deep.

MYSTERY

back

<http://www.wiggage.com/images/VEE-DECKjpgs/sun.html>

17 captures

19 Mar 2002 - 21 Aug 2017

Jun AUG Oct

22

2003 2004 2008

About this capture

The Sun:

I am a little boy laughing, surrounded by bright poster colors. I am the essence of innocent joy and exuberance. Let a thousand flowers bloom! Let the sun shine!! Let's play!!!

EXUBERANCE

back

<http://www.wiggage.com/images/VEE-DECKjpgs/judge.html>

15 captures

18 Oct 2002 - 21 Aug 2017

Feb AUG Oct

15

2003 2004 2005

About this capture

Judgement:

We are the Supreme Court, your inner judges. We sit in ranks while our all-seeing Eye glares. If you look closely at each one of us individually, you will see that we are all slightly different variations of the same picture. There is only one judge, and it is made up of your own past. Who is the judge? You are. Take responsibility for acknowledging your Judge's correctness while not allowing it to control you completely.

RESPONSIBILITY

back

<http://www.wiggage.com/images/VEE-DECKjpgs/world.html>

20 captures

20 Mar 2002 - 21 Aug 2017

Feb AUG Oct

22

2003 2004 2008

About this capture

The World:

I pose prettily before a mandorla filled with complicated swirling patterns. Around me in the corners of the card are symbols of the four elements. I am both and neither man and woman. I am delighted to stand on the interface between the genders as the world does its complicated thing behind me. My breasts and crotch gleam with yellow light to emphasize my enjoyment of this state of being.

INTERFACE

back

<http://www.wiggage.com/images/VEE-DECKjpgs/wounded.html>

19 captures

20 Jun 2002 - 5 Aug 2017

Jun AUG Oct

22

2003 2004 2008

About this capture

The Wounded Warrior:

I am a man dressed in green, holding my hand over my heart and looking pensively down. I am under a tree, dappled with sunlight and shadow. Over my head is a circle with five stars set in it. A crown of stars or a crown of thorns?

EMOTION

back

<http://www.wiggage.com/images/VEE-DECKjpgs/fnord.html>

23 captures

30 Apr 2002 - 21 Aug 2017

Jun AUG Oct

15

2003 2004 2008

About this capture

Fnord:

We are the harbingers of the new revolution fnord. Everything we need to know is in our Little Red Book. The people, united, will never be divided fnord! Join us in our march toward the people's fnord!

HAIL ERIS

back

<http://www.wiggage.com/images/VEE-DECKjpgs/sex.html>

21 captures

2 May 2002 - 5 Aug 2017

Jun AUG Oct

18

2003 2004 2005

About this capture

Sex:

I am the pearl in the rose in the web in the sky; I am the joining of two into one, of one into many. I am the power of ecstatic release. All acts of love and pleasure are My rituals.

TRANSCENDENCE

back

<http://www.wiggage.com/images/VEE-DECKjpgs/blank.html>

17 captures

7 Jun 2002 - 21 Aug 2017

Feb OCT Feb

14

2003 2004 2008

About this capture

[The blank card]:

I mean whatever you want me to mean. Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the Law.

WHAT YOU WILL

back

<http://www.wiggage.com/images/VEE-DECKjpgs/melek.html>

17 captures

23 Dec 2002 - 5 Aug 2017

Jun AUG Oct

18

2003 2004 2008

About this capture

Melek Taus:

I am the Peacock Angel, Melek Taus. I am the Lord of the Painted Fan. I am the Devil. I am the Angel. Once you hear me sing, everything will change.

RADIANCE

back

<http://www.wiggage.com/images/VEE-DECKjpgs/sorrow.html>

18 captures

23 Dec 2002 - 21 Aug 2017

Jun AUG Oct

18

2003 2004 2005

About this capture

Sorrow:

I mourn all those killed in war. I mourn all those killed by their own compulsions. I mourn the dead trees, the blasted landscape. I mourn the waste of life.

THE DEAD PAST

back

<http://www.wiggage.com/images/VEE-DECKjpgs/pride.html>

20 captures

18 Jun 2002 - 21 Aug 2017

Jun AUG Oct

18

2003 2004 2008

About this capture

Pride:

I am the Philosopher-King, the Chef. I know my place in the universe, and I enjoy it. I don't have to prove a thing. "Badges? I don't gotta show you no steenkin' badges!"

SELF-WORTH

back

<http://www.wiggage.com/images/VEE-DECKjpgs/gate.html>

17 captures

23 Feb 2003 - 21 Aug 2017

May AUG Oct

15

2003 2004 2005

About this capture

The Gate:

"I am an infant; who but I

Peers from the unhewn dolmen arch?"

You must go through your own gate, or stand forever on the outside.

Decide.

DECISION

back

<http://www.wiggage.com/images/VEE-DECKjpgs/flashlight.html>

17 captures

18 Oct 2002 - 21 Aug 2017

May AUG Oct

15

2003 2004 2008

About this capture

The Flashlight:

Shine the flashlight on your interior landscape. What are you feeling now? In two words?

THE MOMENT

back

<http://www.wiggage.com/images/VEE-DECKjpgs/silence.html>

21 captures

19 Mar 2002 - 21 Aug 2017

Jun AUG Oct

18

2003 2004 2008

About this capture

Silence:

I am silence but I am not empty. Listen. Look. Feel. Touch. Understand.

SILENCE

back

<http://www.wiggage.com/images/VEE-DECKjpgs/kali.html>

19 captures

23 Dec 2002 - 21 Aug 2017

Jun AUG Oct

15

2003 2004 2005

About this capture

Kali:

I am Kali-Ma, the Great Dark Mother, Devourer of Time. I am Kali, the destroying/renewing aspect of the Ground of Being. I eat demons for breakfast!

DIVINE INTERVENTION

back

<http://www.wiggage.com/images/VEE-DECKjpgs/power.html>

23 captures

18 Mar 2002 - 21 Aug 2017

May AUG Oct

18

2003 2004 2005

About this capture

Power:

I am fire. I am the lightning. I am your ability to move, to choose, to do, to change. There is a sparkle in my eye and a weapon in my hand. Call me up within yourself if you dare: I may burn you, but then again, I may just warm your coffee and get your day started.

Come on--wake UP!!

MOVEMENT

back

<http://www.wiggage.com/images/VEE-DECKjpgs/blessing.html>

19 captures

7 Jun 2002 - 21 Aug 2017

Jun OCT Dec

14

2003 2004 2008

About this capture

Blessing:

I am a new mother sitting with my baby in a sunlit nursery. Blessing flows from me like milk. My love is spread out over all the worlds, and is joyfully given to all beings. "Nor do I demand aught of sacrifice, for behold, I am the mother of all things and My love is poured out upon the earth." Drink up--there's plenty more where that came from!

JOY

back

<http://www.wiggage.com/images/VEE-DECKjpgs/passion.html>

19 captures

18 Mar 2002 - 21 Aug 2017

Jun AUG Oct

18

2003 2004 2008

About this capture

Passion:

I am the power of passion, the impulse to grow, to do, to live, to make life. Feel this passion grow within you, giving purpose to your existence, inspiration to your life, and

making you compassionate to your fellows. Those who truly enjoy living will care for others' lives.

COMPASSION

back

<http://www.wiggage.com/images/VEE-DECKjpgs/innocence.html>

23 captures

13 Mar 2002 - 21 Aug 2017

Jul AUG Sep

15

2003 2004 2005

About this capture

The Black Heart of Innocence:

I am a small boy peeping out from behind my father's drum. Play peekaboo with me!

Right now! I'll hide and you catch me, then you hide and I'll catch you.

INNOCENCE

back

<http://www.wiggage.com/images/VEE-DECKjpgs/east.html>

20 captures

8 Mar 2002 - 21 Aug 2017

May OCT Feb

15

2003 2004 2008

About this capture

East/Air:

I am the air you breathe. In the early dawn, I play my flute, keeping my mind focused on the music. Let the music open your mind, clear your thoughts, lead you in the dance...

CLARITY

back

<http://www.wiggage.com/images/VEE-DECKjpgs/south.html>

21 captures

19 Mar 2002 - 21 Aug 2017

Jun AUG Oct

18

2003 2004 2005

About this capture

South/Fire:

I am the energy which crackles between your nerve endings; I am the scarlet lust of the desert; I am the fire of your true will. Ask me, and I will tell the truth. TRUTH

back

<http://www.wiggage.com/images/VEE-DECKjpgs/west.html>

22 captures

20 Mar 2002 - 21 Aug 2017

Jun AUG Oct

22

2003 2004 2005

About this capture

West/Water:

I am Tiamat, ancient serpent of the deep waters. I bring you dreams, and I bring you love. Do you dare to dive into the waters of your dreams?

RISK

back

<http://www.wiggage.com/images/VEE-DECKjpgs/self.html>

21 captures

19 Mar 2002 - 21 Aug 2017

Jun AUG Oct

18

2003 2004 2008

About this capture

42/Self:

Here am I, the young child not yet disconnected from my divine origins, my true identity, a being perfect and aware. I am the Fool. I'm nobody, who are you?

WHO ARE YOU?

back

<http://www.wiggage.com/images/VEE-DECKjpgs/asabove.html>

18 captures

29 Apr 2002 - 21 Aug 2017

Jun OCT Feb

14

2003 2004 2006

About this capture

As Above, So Below:

I am the words of the Emerald Tablet, believed to hold the key to all mysteries. All systems of magic are claimed to function by this formula.

To know my meaning, look within yourself.

THE KEY

back

<http://www.wiggage.com/images/VEE-DECKjpgs/transmute.html>

20 captures

3 May 2002 - 21 Aug 2017

Jun AUG Oct

22

2003 2004 2008

About this capture

Transmutation:

Whitman said: "Do I contradict myself? Very well, I contradict myself. I am large, I contain multitudes." I am the union of these opposites, as is every human soul.

CONTRADICTION RESOLVED

back

<http://www.wiggage.com/images/VEE-DECKjpgs/crone.html>

18 captures

30 Apr 2002 - 21 Aug 2017

May OCT Feb

15

2003 2004 2008

About this capture

The Crone:

I sit singing behind my cauldron, my raven perched nearby. "From me all things proceed and unto me they must return." I am patient; I can wait.

PATIENCE

back

<http://www.wiggage.com/images/VEE-DECKjpgs/prime.html>

22 captures

2 May 2002 - 21 Aug 2017

Jun AUG Oct

18

2003 2004 2005

About this capture

The Prime Directive:

Demons are those things you give energy to which don't give you energy back, but keep asking for more. Gods are those things you give energy to that support, inspire, and transform you. Invoke early and often.

ADVICE

back

<http://www.wiggage.com/images/VEE-DECKjpgs/coyote.html>

19 captures

13 Jun 2002 - 21 Aug 2017

Jun OCT Dec

15

2003 2004 2008

About this capture

The Chaote

I am Chaos personified. When I come into your life, try not to fight too hard, because you won't win and you'll only exhaust yourself. When I appear, use my presence as the gift it is, and take the opportunity to try on new ways of being for size. You never know...one might fit.

FREEDOM

back

<http://www.wiggage.com/images/VEE-DECKjpgs/hand.html>

17 captures

18 Oct 2002 - 21 Aug 2017

May AUG Oct

15

2003 2004 2005

About this capture

Which Hand?:

I am three moonlit worlds seen through three pairs of hands. Which world is the one you choose to visit? Do you know where you belong? Do threats deter you? Does any of this make you nervous?

UNCERTAINTY

back

<http://www.wiggage.com/images/VEE-DECKjpgs/greek.html>

19 captures

18 Oct 2002 - 21 Aug 2017

Jun AUG Oct

15

2003 2004 2005

About this capture

It's All Greek to Me:

I sit engrossed in a book while formulae do an intricate dance beside me. I have searched the realms of the esoteric and magickal for most of my life, but I still don't understand. Perhaps I'm in the wrong library...

PUZZLING EVIDENCE

back

<http://www.wiggage.com/images/VEE-DECKjpgs/erzulie.html>

19 captures

9 Mar 2002 - 21 Aug 2017

May OCT Dec

15

2003 2004 2008

About this capture

Erzulie-Freda:

I am the Love-Goddess rejoicing in my beauty before my mirror. I am golden, sparkling in the sun. Stop, traveler, and sit with me. I might just be what you're looking for. And if not, well, there are worse places to spend some time. Just don't be surprised when I change my mind about you next morning.

NO PROMISES

back

<http://www.wiggage.com/images/VEE-DECKjpgs/erzulie.html>

19 captures

9 Mar 2002 - 21 Aug 2017

May OCT Dec

15

2003 2004 2008

About this capture

Erzulie-Freda:

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NO PROMISES

back

<http://www.wiggage.com/images/VEE-DECKjpgs/altar.html>

16 captures

7 Jun 2002 - 21 Aug 2017

May OCT Dec

14

2003 2004 2008

About this capture

The Altar:

I am the altar with candles burning. You are the faithful worshiper. Will your faith be rewarded?

FAITH

back

<http://www.wiggage.com/images/VEE-DECKjpgs/3souls.html>

17 captures

15 Oct 2002 - 21 Aug 2017

Jun OCT Dec

14

2003 2004 2006

About this capture

Three Souls:

I am a map, a schematic representation of the intuitive Younger Self, found shining blue in the pelvis; the red vital energy in the heart, the conscious Talking Self; and the pearl-white God Self just over the head which is the connection to the Divine. It is the work of the traveler to line these three up and get them communicating.

ALIGNMENT OF ENERGY

back

<http://www.wiggage.com/images/VEE-DECKjpgs/fear.html>

19 captures

9 Mar 2002 - 21 Aug 2017

May AUG Oct

15

2003 2004 2005

About this capture

Fear:

When you look into an abyss, the abyss also looks into you. I am your deepest fear; own me or die forever to a part of yourself.

THE SHADOW

back

<http://www.wiggage.com/images/VEE-DECKjpgs/3souls.html>

17 captures

15 Oct 2002 - 21 Aug 2017

Jun OCT Dec

14

2003 2004 2006

About this capture

Three Souls:

I am a map, a schematic representation of the intuitive Younger Self, found shining blue in the pelvis; the red vital energy in the heart, the conscious Talking Self; and the pearl-white God Self just over the head which is the connection to the Divine. It is the work of the traveler to line these three up and get them communicating.

ALIGNMENT OF ENERGY

back

<http://www.wiggage.com/images/VEE-DECKjpgs/fear.html>

19 captures

9 Mar 2002 - 21 Aug 2017

May AUG Oct

15

2003 2004 2005

About this capture

Fear:

When you look into an abyss, the abyss also looks into you. I am your deepest fear; own me or die forever to a part of yourself.

THE SHADOW

back

<http://www.wiggage.com/images/VEE-DECKjpgs/lost.html>

20 captures

17 Jun 2002 - 21 Aug 2017

May AUG Oct

18

2003 2004 2005

About this capture

Persephone/Lost:

I am every child's face on a milk-carton. Have you seen me? I am all the missing children, all those who have been taken from their mothers untimely. Have you seen me? I am all that innocence in yourself which has been torn from you without your consent. Have you seen me?

HOPE

back

<http://www.wiggage.com/images/VEE-DECKjpgs/guides.html>

20 captures

30 Apr 2002 - 21 Aug 2017

Jun AUG Oct

15

2003 2004 2008

About this capture

The Guides:

We are those who have changed your life, who have guided you on your path. We tell you to choose your name, choose your destiny. You are never alone. If you need us, we are always here.

GUIDANCE

back

<http://www.wiggage.com/images/VEE-DECKjpgs/ouro.html>

22 captures

18 Mar 2002 - 21 Aug 2017

Jun AUG Oct

18

2003 2004 2008

About this capture

The Great Round:

I am the snake which swallows its tail. I am ouroboros, the sign of eternity, set out among the stars. I know that all things must pass, and that all things will return. I know that there are cycles within cycles, wheels within wheels, and that the wheel of time is ever turning.

TIME

back

<http://www.wiggage.com/veedeck.html>

70 captures

14 Feb 2002 - 14 Mar 2022

Jun AUG Oct

25

2003 2004 2005

[About this capture](#)

A Book of Dreams with Pictures and Words

by Valerie Walker

©2001

This is not a standard Tarot deck, even though the first 22 cards are named after the Major Arcana of the Tarot. All 56 cards in this deck are major arcana; the images are meant to be ambiguous and the interpretations merely descriptive of one point of view. You are free to make up your own meanings for each card, which may shift from time to time depending on the surrounding cards in your layout. Another difference from the traditional Tarot deck is that there are no reversed-card meanings. Each card is what it is, which is what you say it is. Listen to the cards speak.

[pick a card](#)

[the cards](#)

[more cards](#)

[tarot links](#)

[other resources](#)

.

You need the Flash 5 player to see the animated display.

[download it](#)

Or if you'd rather just check out the cards individually, see below.

[the cards:](#)

The Fool The Magickian The High Priestess The Empress The Emperor
The Heirophant The Lovers The Chariot Strength The Hermit The
Wheel of Fortune Justice The Hanged Man Death Temperance The
Devil The Tower The Star The Moon The Sun Judgement The
World

[The World is the last of the traditional Tarot trumps. From here on, the journey is through uncharted territory.]

The Wounded Warrior Fnord Sex [The blank card] Melek Taus Sorrow
Pride The Gate The Flashlight Silence Kali Power Blessing
Passion The Black Heart of Innocence East/Air South/Fire West/Water
North/Earth 42/Self As Above, So Below Transmutation The Crone The
Prime Directive The Chaote/Coyote Which Hand? It's All Greek to Me
Erzulie-Freda The Altar Three Souls Fear Persephone/Lost The
Guides The Great Round
top

more cards

which are not part of the vee-deck, but might prove to be the beginnings of vee-deck
mark two (a continuing process):

Hestia

Mr. Showbiz

Under Ground

City Lights

Santa Claus

The True Believer

Birds on the Wire

The Cards

top

tarot links

- dbZa's zee-tarot designs

- my zee-tarot designs

other decks:

- The Mystic Eye features the vee-deck for review, plus loads of other decks.
- FREE Tarot Readings!
- The Hello Kitty Tarot by Joe Rosales!
- Morgan's Tarot
- Aeclectic Tarottarot cards, decks, reviews & resources
- Tarot Fool
- Uncarrot Tarot

card publishers:

- Llewellyn Writer Guidelines
- US Games

making your own cards:

- Useful notes on making and publishing your own tarot deck
- EPSON America, Inc.: source for paper
- Epson Compatible Ink: source for ink
- Flax Art & Design : art supplies

other resources:

tombo studiosTombo Studios: Art and Adornment from the realm of Faery
top

Free JavaScripts provided by The JavaScript Source

<http://www.wiggage.com/dbZatarot.html>

16 captures

8 Mar 2002 - 25 Jan 2021

Jun SEP Dec

01

2003 2004 2005

About this capture

dbZa's designs for the zee-tarot

(click thumbnail for enlarged view)

6 of pentacles 8 of cups knight of swords

princess of swords 3 of pentacles 9 of cups

princess of wands HungOne magician

tarot links

- veedub's zee-tarot designs

- The Vee-Deck: veedub's deck.

other decks:

- The Mystic Eye features the vee-deck for review, plus loads of other decks.

- The Art of Magick
- FREE Tarot Readings!
- The Hello Kitty Tarot by Joe Rosales!
- Morgan's Tarot
- Tarot Cards, Decks, Reviews & Resources
- Tarot Fool--Welcome!
- TAROT: Tools and Rites of Transformation
- Uncarrot Tarot

card publishers:

- Llewellyn Writer Guidelines
- US Games

making your own cards:

- Useful notes on making and publishing your own tarot deck
- EPSON America, Inc.: source for paper
- Epson Compatible Ink: source for ink
- Flax Art & Design : art supplies

<http://www.compostcoven.org/compost/tanya.html>

33 captures

13 Jul 2002 - 31 Dec 2009

Jun AUG Oct

10

2003 2004 2005

About this capture

A Witch in the Family

Tanya Miller

[Tanya Miller is my 16-year-old niece, and wrote this paper for a college-level English class. She is not a witch, and knew little about the Craft before interviewing me. I'm posting it because I think it shows that young people, even those outside the Craft, can see us much more clearly and impartially than can their elders. There's hope for the future...--vw]

When one thinks of a Witch, most would probably picture an ugly old lady with clammy tinted green skin, an atrocious wart on her nose, dressed in all black with a pointed hat, riding a broom. Then there is Valerie Walker. A woman who is considered a senior citizen, one of the rare ones that sports a nose ring and an almost buzz cut of ever-changing colors. Strangely enough her look beautifully suits her, and what stands out is a rather large silver pentacle dangling around her neck. It is a symbol of her religion that she holds very dear to her. She has one of the most intriguing life stories that one will ever come by. She has studied the Wiccan craft since the 1950s, and since 1975 when she was initiated into her first coven she has considered herself a Witch.

Valerie's path to the craft started in the 1950's when she found the book *The White Goddess* by Robert Graves. She stumbled upon it one day when she was in a library, and it has forever changed her life. Up until that point she had been bouncing around different religions, starting out her life as a Christian¹ and later becoming a Quaker. *The White Goddess* is all about the Wiccan religion and Valerie read and studied that book for at least twenty years before she was presented with her next opportunity on her path to becoming a Witch. In 1975 Valerie got wind of a class being taught on *The White Goddess*, she immediately signed up. For years she had been asking questions and trying to find a Witch to become an apprentice to, but it was practically impossible back then. It turned out that the class was not merely about the book but about the entire religion. The teacher was named Starhawk and took Valerie under her wing. After being an apprentice to Starhawk, in 1975, Valerie was initiated into her first coven and officially became a Witch.

As anyone can imagine, she receives a wide array of reactions to her religion. When asked what people say to her she responded with "I used to come out as a Witch and people would ask me, are you a good witch or a bad witch? That's the same as asking are you a good person or a bad person?" People have the stereotypical Wizard of Oz witch imprinted in their mind. They don't realize that's not what the Wicca craft is. The modern Witch doesn't run around either trying to ruin people's lives or save the world from evil. Valerie tries to educate people on the subject by stating "No matter what in magick or in life, if you do bad things they will come back to you." Valerie would never curse a person, because she knows it will come back to haunt her. People fear "bad" witches because they fear the unknown; if people realized what the Wiccan religion was all about, they would see they have nothing to fear.

The Wiccan religion centers around the Goddess and the earth's biosphere. Witches realize they are part of the earth and can't escape it. "Earth is mother and we must take care of her." No matter what division of the craft a Witch belongs to, they all hold that basic concept. The rest of us could learn a lot from Witches about that aspect. Some covens are even very political and will hold environmentalist demonstrations. A Witch realizes that we are connected to everything, everything below us, everything around us and everything above us. A Witch is connected to all five elements: air, fire, water, earth and spirit. A Witch realizes that they are the center of all four directions: north, east, south, and west. An amazing sense of belonging is derived by Witches from these concepts, as Valerie states, "It made me feel I was the center of it all."

The Wiccan religion is both very spiritual and physical. There are many different ways that witches practice magick (when referring to Witches' magick it is spelt with a k so not to be confused with the illusion that magicians practice) Every Witch has a specialty; Valerie's is making mojos and reading tarot cards. Mojoes are basically magick bags that can be created for a variety of reasons. They can be made as love potions; these mojos don't have the power to make someone love a person but they can make someone more loveable. They can be made for luck, or to aid you in any other wish someone might have. Valerie has also been reading tarot cards since the 1970s. She believes that everyone has all of their subconscious feelings floating out there-- it is just a matter of if we are in tune enough to pick them up. Tarot cards are Valerie's way of tuning into other people. Valerie realizes "If you are doing magick you have to do it on the mundane level too." Other witches' specialties could be things like crystal gazing or being able to make spells with herbs, or dream work. No matter what the specialty, all witches derive some unique power from their religion. Valerie is still very active in witchcraft and her current coven is called the Circle of Winged Toads. They meet every other week and practice a variety of spells. Some times they will do a spell called raising a cone of power. It is when everyone in the coven gets in a circle and starts to chant, they will start to create a positive energy force; once they have created this energy and know its purpose they will send it out to someone or something. Valerie deeply believes in this power and states, "I've been in rooms when you actually feel the energy all around you and you can feel it rushing past you as you send it out." They will also do incantations, they will call on someone from the past to help with a certain purpose. When they call on someone they call from within themselves and from all around them.

Valerie's coven is very important to her: "It is not merely someplace we go and worship, it's a method of making yourself a more self aware and balanced person." Whether or not a person believes in the power of magick they can't deny the psychological help it can provide to people.

The Craft has been a huge part of Valerie for the majority of her life. She is one of the lucky people who was able to find the religion that suits them. The Wiccan religion has worked its way into the heart of her family. Valerie's only daughter was recently initiated²... and Valerie is currently training her husband to become a Witch. When asked about him she said smiling "I feel so lucky to have a partner that I can not only connect with on a physical level but also on an elevated spiritual level."

The Craft has been misconceived for centuries; it is not about black magick-- it is there to provide guidance and help to many. It gives Valerie an elevated sense of connection to the earth, her family and everyone around her. To her it is "perfect love and perfect trust."

1. Actually, I was born Jewish.
2. Not so recently...Diana has been a card-carrying Witch since she was 18.

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Page updated 01/01/2026

<http://www.compostcoven.org/compost/list.html>

24 captures

1 Feb 2002 - 31 Dec 2009

Jun AUG Feb

06

2003 2004 2006

[About this capture](#)

Reading List

[compiled a loooooong time ago, but these are the classics. Feel free to update and send us your recommendations.]

- Anon. A book of pagan rituals. Weiser 1978.
- Adler, Margot. Drawing down the moon. Viking 1979.
- Bonewits, P.E.I. Real magic. Creative Arts Book Co. 1979 (rev. ed.)
- Burkhardt, Titus. Alchemy. Penguin 1971.
- Campbell, Joseph. The masks of God. (four volumes). Viking 1971.
- -----The mythic image.
- -----Hero with a thousand faces.
- -----, ed. The portable Jung. Viking 1975.
- Carrington, Leonora. The hearing trumpet. Pocket Books 1977 (fiction).
- Crowley, John. Little, big. Bantam 1983 (fiction).
- Deren, Maya. The divine horsemen.
- DeRola. Alchemy, the secret art.
- Douglas, Alfred. The tarot. Penguin 1972.
- Durdin-Robinson, Lawrence. The goddesses of Chaldea, Syria and Egypt. Cesara 1975.
- Eisler, Riane. The chalice and the blade. Harper & Row 1988.
- Eliade, Mircea. The forge and the crucible. Harper & Row 1971.
- Garner, Alan. The owl service. Ballantine 1981 (fiction).
- Gleason, Judith. Oya: in praise of the goddess. Shambhala 1987.
- Graves, Robert. The white goddess. Farrar 1970.
- -----King Jesus (fiction).

- -----The Greek myths. 2 vol. Penguin 1975.
- Halifax, Joan. Shamanic voices. E.P. Dutton 1979.
- Hall, Nor. The moon and the virgin. Harper & Row 1980.
- Hansen, Harold. The witch's garden. Unity Press 1978.
- Harding, M. Esther. Women's mysteries. Harper & Row 1971.
- -----The way of all women. Harper & Row 1975.
- Helprin, Mark. Winter's tale. Pocket Books 1983 (fiction).
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About this capture

Introduction–

About Compost Coven

by Valerie Walker, HPs (1975-1981)

History:

Like its namesake the compost pile, Compost Coven has been turned over many times, scattered to fertilize new growth elsewhere, and reassembled using all KINDS of oddly-assorted elements.

Compost Coven was formed in the early 1970s by a group of people who had little or no knowledge of Wicca, but who were determined to re-create a viable religion which emphasized the worship of the Great Goddess and her Consort. It was a post-hippie, pre-punk gathering of poets and lunatics who were into finding new and creative ways to deal with their relationship to the Goddess. The founding High Priestess, Starhawk, had been initiated into the Faery tradition; but strands of many traditions, learned both from personal contact with Witches and from books, added to the archetypal materials which arose from dreams and group trancework, were woven by the original Composters to form a web of unique design, unlike that of any other group.

In the year after I was initiated, many of the original group went on to other affiliations, left town, or went Solitary, leaving me to become High Priestess on gaining my Red Cord. To keep it going, I decided to turn Compost into a training coven for novice witches. During the next several years a LOT of turning over took place: many initiations, many people going off into the half-astral, and some few sticking around to see what would happen. The problem with being high priestess in charge of training a bunch of witches is that inevitably you become a mother figure, and catch all the static that goes with the role. When I moved out of San Francisco in 1981, I passed the wand to Decius. She was not long in realizing that it's a dirty job and throwing the ball to Linda, who soldiered on for a couple of years before laying it in the long-suffering lap of Leah.

Rituals were still held fairly regularly, but no new apprentices were being taken in, and gradually all the initiates qualified for Red Cord. By the summer of 1986, when I returned to San Francisco, the current H.Ps. was sick of it too, and I had undertaken a mighty vow that Never Again would you catch me being the High Priestess. Problem was, there weren't any other women involved in the group, and you can't have a male H.Ps.....or can you??

We fudged on that question, and decided that it would be easier to run the coven as a group. When we had rituals, whoever wanted to officiate could do so, without regard to gender, and screw tradition. This way worked well for us.

For the next few years, we focused more on publishing our magazine, THE COMPOST NEWSLETTER, and less on holding rituals on a regular basis--perhaps because we are such a bunch of Solitaires at heart. It may also be because we have such a varied set of influences working, everything from the simple Wicca rituals we used to use in the old Compost College days to Santeria, Voudon, shamanism, Native American practices, you name it. At the same time, there's a real connection between Composters past and present that doesn't seem to have much to do with what we are doing with each other.

Current status:

One of my former students, Cynthia Gregory, became a founding member of a separate group, the Circle of the Winged Toads. Active for over eighteen years, in 1999 the Circle of the Winged Toads became sheltered under the Compost Coven, Inc. corporation umbrella (there was literally a Passing of the Umbrella ritual, but that's another story). The Toads are active and growing, and many of the articles in this site have been written by Cynthia for use at Toads gatherings. As for Compost proper, we have become a Board of Directors, which meets officially once a year. I am the "Throne (chair)", and am pleased to remain so, as long as I don't have to do anything that resembles work. Cynthia is the official "All That Is (secretary, summoner, and general dogsbody)", and she is definitely ALL THAT. She has been compiling her own Disk of Shadows, and I intend to include these articles and rituals in this site. So keep watching!

I would like to put this Website and its divisions out into the world in order to keep the teachings going without having to go through all the politics and hassles of running a study-group. It is designed to be a teaching aid for both groups and solitaires. There are many, MANY more books available on the Craft than there were when I got started; but I still say, as I have always said, that the best thing you can do is GROW YOUR OWN. So take this as a friendly pointer for the newcomer to the Craft, and possibly an illustration of a slightly different tradition to the more experienced Witch; but use it as one would use compost. Scatter it around in your garden, keep it moist, dig it in, and plant the seeds of your own inspiration in it. Keep it watered and weeded. And stop to smell the roses.

Happy Trails and Blessed Be --Valerie

Classic Compost minus Diane

Classic Compost reunion (c.1988?).

Standing, l to r: Jo, Beth, Marv, Valerie, Starhawk. Seated: Amber. Camera-shy: Arden and Diane.

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Notes From Diane's Garden: Or The Curious Lore and Magical Property of Plants, from the pen of Diane Fenster, Prime Mover of the Universe.

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Notes from Diane's Garden
Or The Curious Lore and Magical Property of Plants
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Contents:

- April 1987: Roses
- May 1987: Vervain
- June 1987: Lilies
- July 1987: Iris
- August 1987: Corn
- September 1987: Seeds
- October 1987: Apple/Pumpkin/the Day of the Dead
- November 1987: Foxglove
- December 1987: Holly/Ivy/Mistletoe
- January 1988: Periwinkle/Cowslip/ Primrose/Violet)
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- Lammas 1988: Datura
- Mabon 1988: Aconite and Belladonna
- Samhain 1988: Flying Ointments/Hemlock
- Yule 1988: Henbane
- Brigid 1989: Blackberry
- Beltaine 1989: Willow
- Eostre 1989: Oak
- Lammas 1989: Ash

Diane's work can be viewed at:

- her commercial site
- a page on Adobe's site
- the Photodisk site

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Diane
The Prime Mover of the Universe

<http://www.compostcoven.org/cnl/johex.html>

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About this capture

Jo's Hex spells

PDFs to Download and Color

These Hex Spells were partly created by and partly gathered from traditional hex materials by Jo Steen. It was Jo's dream to found the Hecate Homeland, a place where a shrine to the goddess Hecate could live, and where Witches could retire to the Hecate Home for Harried Hags to spend a pleasant old age rocking and cackling together on the front porch. Unfortunately, this dream didn't materialize for Jo. She died in Seattle, far from her fellow Composters. But while in San Francisco, Jo accomplished a lot. In 1980 Jo commissioned sculptor Medea Maquis to make a shrine to the Triple Goddess Hecate, and that shrine is now resident in land belonging to Witches in the Northwest. (Here's the full story.)

Over many years, she taught Magickal techniques to her students: I remember going over to her house to make candles with Magickal intent, and how she would tell us that anything you do can be magickal -- it's all in the intent. She was particularly fond of the process of coloring hex spells with intent. For years she collected traditional Pennsylvania Dutch hex signs, and added to the resource with African symbols and medieval talismans. Once she had accumulated the designs, she had them printed out on sheets of paper with instructions for coloring them. She sold sets at street fairs and by mail, with the money going to benefit the Hecate Shrine Land Fund.

How to Use the Hex Spells:

Download and print out the spell you want. Using the correspondences on four and seven, choose appropriate colors for your intention. Always work deosil (clockwise) for increase, and widdershins (counterclockwise) for decrease of whatever it is you wish. Be very concentrated on your intent the entire time you are coloring the spell--it's a meditative device, like the Asian yantra, but it's also interactive, engaging both body and mind. Stay within the lines as precisely as you possibly can -- neatness counts!

The spells for Insight/Inspiration/ Creativity and Rapid Progress need one other step: the insight, progress, etc., is toward some particular end, so you will have to download and print out the minihexen, each of which should fit right in the middle or the larger spell, so you are asking for rapid progress in the affairs of making things manifest (a good money spell) or rapid progress in matters of health, and so on.

When you're done you can hang them on your wall, laminate them into a plate, have them copied as a tee shirt or mouse pad, carried with you as a good-luck charm....or

give them to someone to whom you wish well. You could also use the patterns for embroidery or cross-stitch (which takes a lot longer and needs a lot more intent, so the spell would be a lot stronger), to decorate a birthday cake, to knit a sweater, as a tattoo design -- whatever your heart desires and your hands are good at.

The Hecate Shrine
The Hecate Shrine

Jo Steen, 1930-1996
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[Quotes are from Jo's printed set of Hex Spells]

1.) Abundance:

this is for abundance in any area you might need, not merely the physical.

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13.) Mini-Hex spells to use in the center of IIC or Rapid Progress:
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Pete Pathfinder of the Aquarian Tabernacle Church writes:

Have you looked lately at our web page and seen the college catalog from our Woolston-STEEN Theological Seminary, a Washington state Dept of Higher Education Coordinating Board Degree Authorization Agency-approved Wiccan seminary, granting academic degrees from Assoc. Min. thru D. Min.? It is named in honor of Jo and Patricia Woolston, another Canadian priestess and teacher now passed over. I'd like to hear your comments on this. We presently have 28 students enrolled in their 3rd yr of a 4 yr bachelor program, another first for Wicca in the known universe, I fear.

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These Hex Spells were partly created by and partly gathered from traditional hex materials by Jo Steen. It was Jo's dream to found the Hecate Homeland, a place where a shrine to the goddess Hecate could live, and where Witches could retire to the Hecate Home for Harried Hags to spend a pleasant old age rocking and cackling together on the front porch. Unfortunately, this dream didn't materialize for Jo. She died in Seattle, far from her fellow Composters. But while in San Francisco, Jo accomplished a lot. In 1980 Jo commissioned sculptor Medea Maquis to make a shrine to the Triple Goddess Hecate, and that shrine is now resident in land belonging to Witches in the Northwest. (Here's the full story.)

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seven, choose appropriate colors for your intention. Always work deosil (clockwise) for increase, and widdershins (counterclockwise) for decrease of whatever it is you wish. Be very concentrated on your intent the entire time you are coloring the spell--it's a meditative device, like the Asian yantra, but it's also interactive, engaging both body and mind. Stay within the lines as precisely as you possibly can -- neatness counts!

The spells for Insight/Inspiration/ Creativity and Rapid Progress need one other step: the insight, progress, etc., is toward some particular end, so you will have to download and print out the minihexen, each of which should fit right in the middle or the larger spell, so you are asking for rapid progress in the affairs of making things manifest (a good money spell) or rapid progress in matters of health, and so on.

When you're done you can hang them on your wall, laminate them into a plate, have them copied as a tee shirt or mouse pad, carried with you as a good-luck charm....or give them to someone to whom you wish well. You could also use the patterns for embroidery or cross-stitch (which takes a lot longer and needs a lot more intent, so the spell would be a lot stronger), to decorate a birthday cake, to knit a sweater, as a tattoo design -- whatever your heart desires and your hands are good at.

The Hecate Shrine
The Hecate Shrine

Jo Steen, 1930-1996
Jo Steen, 1930-1996

The Hex Spells:

[Quotes are from Jo's printed set of Hex Spells]

1.) Abundance:

this is for abundance in any area you might need, not merely the physical.
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2.) Growth:

this one can also be used with the minihexen for growth in particular areas. Be very sure to ALWAYS do this one deosil, from the center out in a growth spiral. Jo says: "Growth (in whatever you desire) The Double Growth Spiral. color in the spiral figure, working in a clockwise direction, and you will complete your GROWTH."

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3.) Insight, Inspiration and Creativity:

one of Jo's favorites. Use it with the minihexen to gain insight into whatever area of your life needs it. Jo says: "The Rain that Refreshes the soul Insight-Inspiration-Creativity. A Green-working spell. The rain of INSPIRATION drops thru the Rainbow of PROMISE to water the EARTH-STAR. The Earth-Star, CENTERED with the Earth-Star-flower is always turning, alternating night/day, light/heavy, etc. Work in a clockwise direction for increase of insight, inspiration, and CREATIVITY."

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4.) Joy:

pretty obvious...use nice bright full-spectrum colors for this one. Jo says: "This is the Earth-Star-flower arranged to bring Joy and Happiness. Clear Yellow radiating Light is the beginning. Add contrast and definition with the rich, deep tones of the earth in which you find joy."

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5.) Time of the Lilies:

to bring peace and calm among people. Jo says: "The Time of the Lilies. Trace & colour carefully in Purple for Nobility. This is a spell to bring the time of Righteousness & Peace and Love among all creatures living as Sisters & Brothers. Draw it often."

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6.) Lucky In Love:

give your romance a little jump-start.

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as above, so below--making that which is desired present in the world. Very powerful.

Jo says: " Creation-manifestation and materialization. "as below, so above".

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remember, rapid progress with no particular aim is merely spinning your wheels. Jo says: " The Whirling Star-Rapid progress. Let any of the smaller symbols be placed in the centre of the Star for rapid, well-advised progress, manifesting change in the direction so displayed."

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an old talisman from the Middle Ages. Carry with you when traveling.

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to find the one you will stay with.

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<http://www.compostcoven.org/cnl/johex.html>

35 captures

23 Apr 2001 - 28 Dec 2009

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2003 2004 2006

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<http://www.compostcoven.org/compost/four.html>

33 captures

24 Apr 2001 - 28 May 2010

Apr JUN Aug

20

2003 2004 2006

[About this capture](#)

Correspondences on Four
DIRECTION

East

South

West

North

STONES

white opal, topaz

carnelian, Mexican opal, bloodstone, ruby

emerald, triplet opal, sapphire, aquamarine

moss agate, matrix opal

WOOD

ash, birch

pine, cedar

willow, alder

rowan, elder

OILS

sandalwood, lavender, cinnamon

bay, camomile, clove, patchouli

rosemary, myrrh, wintergreen

rose, orris, musk, mint, jasmine

SABBAT

Eostre

Litha

Mabon

Yule

SEASON

Spring

Summer

Autumn

Winter

ELEMENT

Air

Fire

Water

Earth

TOOL

Athame

Wand

Chalice

Pentacle

COLOR

Yellow

Red

Blue

Green

TIME

Dawn

Noon

Dusk

Midnight

BODYPART

Breath

Aura

Blood

Flesh & Bone

ANIMAL

Eagle

Lion

Serpent

Bull

ATTRIBUTE

Joy

Potency

Fertility

Safety

MENTAL

Intellect

Intuition

Emotion

Sensation

ALCHEMY

Evaporation

Combustion

Solutionr

Fixation

LIFESTAGE

Birth

Growth

Death

Decay

AGE

Childhood

Youth

Maturity

Old Age

WITCH POWER

Imagination

Will

Faith

Secrecy

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pine, cedar

willow, alder

rowan, elder

OILS

sandalwood, lavender, cinnamon

bay, camomile, clove, patchouli

rosemary, myrrh, wintergreen

rose, orris, musk, mint, jasmine

SABBAT

Eostre

Litha

Mabon

Yule

SEASON

Spring

Summer

Autumn

Winter

ELEMENT

Air

Fire

Water

Earth

TOOL

Athame

Wand

Chalice

Pentacle

COLOR

Yellow

Red

Blue

Green

TIME

Dawn

Noon

Dusk

Midnight

BODYPART

Breath

Aura

Blood

Flesh & Bone

ANIMAL

Eagle

Lion

Serpent

Bull

ATTRIBUTE

Joy

Potency

Fertility

Safety

MENTAL

Intellect

Intuition

Emotion

Sensation

ALCHEMY

Evaporation

Combustion

Solutionr

Fixation

LIFESTAGE

Birth

Growth

Death

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AGE

Childhood

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Spring

Summer

Autumn

Winter

ELEMENT

Air

Fire

Water

Earth

TOOL

Athame

Wand

Chalice

Pentacle

COLOR

Yellow

Red

Blue

Green

TIME

Dawn

Noon

Dusk

Midnight

BODYPART

Breath

Aura

Blood

Flesh & Bone

ANIMAL

Eagle

Lion

Serpent

Bull

ATTRIBUTE

Joy

Potency

Fertility

Safety

MENTAL

Intellect

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Emotion

Sensation

ALCHEMY

Evaporation

Combustion

Solutionr

Fixation

LIFESTAGE

Birth

Growth

Death

Decay

AGE

Childhood

Youth

Maturity

Old Age

WITCH POWER

Imagination

Will

Faith

Secrecy

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<http://www.compostcoven.org/compost/seven.html>

23 captures

26 Aug 2002 - 31 Dec 2009

Mar JUN Aug

23

2003 2004 2006

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Correspondences on Seven

HERBS FOR THE SEVEN PLANETS

(Note these are all edible herbs, but by no means a complete list.)

SUN: angelica, bay laurel, camomile, cinnamon, clove, rosemary, rue, saffron

MOON: bay laurel, ginseng, nutmeg, wintergreen

MARS: basil, cayenne, coriander, garlic, mustard

MERCURY: cinnamon, dill, fennel, fenugreek, mace, marjoram, parsley

JUPITER: anise seed, cloves, mace, mint, nutmeg, sage

VENUS: angelica, cardamom, marjoram, mint, pennyroyal, saffron, tarragon, thyme

SATURN: comfrey, hemp, rue, tarragon, thyme, wintergreen

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<http://www.compostcoven.org/cnl/abundance.pdf>

7 captures

7 Aug 2004 - 3 Feb 2007

Jul AUG Nov

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<http://www.compostcoven.org/cnl/johex.html>

35 captures

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2003 2004 2006

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<http://www.wiggage.com/shrine/josteen.html>

33 captures

1 Jun 2001 - 10 Aug 2016

Jul AUG Oct

25

2003 2004 2005

About this capture

In Memoriam--

Jo Steen

In Memoriam--

Jo Steen

by Pete Pathfinder Davis,
reprinted from PANEGYRIA

Samh'ain again, as the wheel continues on relentlessly turning. It is with a mixture of sadness and joy that I learned a few days ago of the October 21st passing over of Mother Moth, otherwise known as Jo Steen, a founding member of Starhawk's Compost Coven in San Francisco many years ago, and a very dear friend and mentor. Jo had gone to SF from Seattle years ago, and ultimately returned here to live. I have sadness at the loss of a dear friend, committed Wiccan priestess and maker of magic; joy at her release from suffering and her passage to the Summerland. I know if she returns to this time and place again, we will recognize her from her boundless enthusiasm and energy. To me, she has always epitomized the goddess Hecate in Her crone aspect

While in California, Jo had commissioned and paid for for the creation of The Hecate Shrine, a beautiful work of fine art from the hand of sculptor Medea Maquis depicting Hecate as three women seated on a stone, each holding two torches. I'm not certain of the origins of the sculpture beyond the fact that Jo designed and sketched the overall concept and the housing containing it, but it has always been pretty clear to me that the three faces of Hecate were those of Jo Steen, Starhawk, and Medea Maquis.

It was Jo's original intent to honor the goddess Hecate Triformis, with a shrine to be

used as a focus to raise the money for a permanent piece of land where Pagans could gather. After a short while, the idea sort of died after raising only about \$400 in total, and she took the shrine back to Seattle with her when she returned. It then was passed from Pagan family to Pagan family, with no permanent resting place.

Back in 1985, Jo came here to the Tabernacle to our first Solitary Convention. She told me that she was impressed with the fact that we had already accomplished what they had tried unsuccessfully to do, and asked us if we would accept her gift of the Hecate Shrine, and maintain it here on our land. Naturally, we accepted.

In the intervening years Jo became increasingly ill with emphysema, and became tethered to an oxygen tank in her apartment in Seattle. At first, she came to Spring Mysteries a few times, but ultimately had to remain closer to home as her oxygen need became more serious. She remained in her apartment until about a week or so before she passed over.

This coming spring, the Hecate Shrine will finally be placed in its own shrine building, on the hill behind the Tabernacle right next to the stone circle where Jo has worshiped with us on more than one occasion. The building is being refurbished with a new floor and carpeting, and will be dedicated as a no-shoes meditation area, with the Hecate Shrine situated centrally in the large room. I wish we had been able to manifest Jo's dream for a separate building to house the shrine a little sooner, but I know she will be at the dedication this spring, even if we can't see her.

Merry meet, and merry part, Jo Steen, and merry meel again! Your corporeal presence may be gone from us for now, but your spirit, enthusiasm and dedication to the Craft lives on in the hearts of all of us whose lives you touched and changed."She changes everything She touches, and...everything She touches, changes!"

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FOR JO STEEN
(1930-1996)

Where three roads meet i will find you
where three roads meet is your crossroads -- the Herme marks the spot
with a pile of stones is the Triskelion a three-legged race
endlessly around a full moon-face big enough for everyone to fit in
where crows dawdle & cackle & caw

diminutive all of-a-piece a shoal of dark shrugging wings
intense overbearing informative a story to tell you must listen to the very end of
intrusive suggestive fraught with your own peculiar wisdom
your own lived-in life a very narrow path indeed yet full of friends & family

bohemian gypsy commissioning new religious art & peddling yr hocus-pocus
fanning yourself with Tarot cards covenning the foundation of the wiccan revival

Mother Moth come to rest & at roost among witches & familiars
pestering roistering gadfly-dragon
Mother Moth the Crone alone no longer adrift in an air too thin for her to grasp
Mother Moth her wings unsinged around the flame of a lamp
at the foot of Hekate's statue

Magna Mater little flea Leukothea Anthracite Isis
the Crow seeing her reflection pluriform & multifaceted
shellacked & shiny in a dragonfly's eye:
diminutive madonna-haired Jo Steen

the Crow... the Crone the Crone...the Crow the Crow...the Crone
. . . the CROWN

Mothermoth/triskelion.... 3 leaves left on a barren tree
3 stones left standing inside a circle cut into the earth long ago with a stick
where black crows shrug & lift their heads & nod & flap their shawls
Where 3 roads meet in the kingdom of hades & persephone
i will find you at a clear spring by a white cypress where the good waters of memory
fountain & bubble & never stop.

-- Frank Donnola, 12/96

THE PAINTER IN THE COURTYARD for Jo Steen

The painter
holds his breath,
covers
a terrace wall
-- 12 strokes. He blows

a lung full
of cigarette
smoke
against
the

wall, dips his brush

& slaps white paint
across a doorway.

Now he turns a corner
-- he's gone.

Just then
the morning
is over.
Lunchtime!

In two hours the courtyard
has changed from brown
to

white.

Now the air fills
with

intense, green

birds.

by Tony Vaughan
<http://www.compostcoven.org/cnl/chef.html>
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Hail To the Chef
Magickal Recipes of Ron Miller
reprinted from the Compost NewsLetter
[These recipes appeared in the Compost NewsLetter during 1990-92, while Ron was the executive chef of the Ristorante Donatello in San Francisco. All Magickal interpretations and comments are by Valerie Walker.]

"What does cooking have to do with the Craft?" you may ask. Plenty. "As above, so below" is an ancient principle which is the basis of all Magickal acts and arts. Spells can be edible, and meals can be made with Magickal intent, using the ancient system of correspondences to tie in your ingredients with your purpose. The following recipes, while not originally intended as spells, can certainly be used this way if constructed in the right frame of mind. The ingredients' symbolic meanings are at the end of most of the recipes. And the effects on those to whom the meals are served can be amazing...vw]

The Recipes:

Garganelli con ragu di fagiano
Pasta tubes with pheasant ragu

Lo Scrino di Pero e Castagne
Pastry "jewel box" with pear and chestnut cream

Gnocchi alla romana con funghi e carciofi
Semolina gnocchi with mushrooms and artichokes

Rombo al forno con patate al rosmarino
Halibut filet encrusted with potatoes and rosemary

Fricassee d'Astasco con Finocchio
Lobster fricassee with fennel

Pasta alla Puttanesca
"Whores' Pasta"

Warm Goat Cheese rolled in Pistachios with Fennel and Blood Oranges

Chilled Cucumber and Dill Soup with Beet Mousseline

Oven Roasted Salmon coated with Pumpkinseeds on Sauteed Apples, and Calvados Butter Sauce

The Yule Feast:

Baby Beet and String Bean Salad with a Balsamic Vinaigrette
Quadrucchi with Parsley in Lobster Broth
Loin of Lamb Stuffed with Caponata in Black Olive Sauce
Chocolate Caramel Pine Nut Tureen with a Bitter Chocolate Sauce
(recipe by Marianne Young, former pastry chef, Ristorante Donatello)

Braised Seabass with Tomatoes and Artichokes

Monkfish with Dried Tomatoes and Hazelnuts

Quail Egg Ravioli with Wild Game Sauce

Walnut Drop Cookies

Black and White Pinwheel Pasta with Smoked Chicken

Lasagne al ragu d'anatra (Lasagne with duck ragu)

Tagliolini with Prawns, Scallops, and Mussels in a light Lemon Sauce

Civet de Biche

Sauce Grand Venuere

Selvagina Sauce

Cumberland Sauce

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Garganelli con ragu di fagiano
Pasta tubes with pheasant ragu

To make the ragu:
1 pheasant, about 2 pounds
1 medium onion, finely diced
1 stalk celery, finely diced
1 small carrot, finely diced
3 tablespoons chopped basil
1 tablespoon chopped rosemary

1 cup red wine
1 29 oz. can whole peeled tomatoes
1 tablespoon tomato paste

Bone the pheasant, removing the skin from the breasts and legs. Bone the legs, carefully removing the tendons from the thigh. Grind the pheasant meat using a grinding plate with large holes or mince the meat by hand using a large chef's knife. Put the meat, the diced vegetables and the chopped herbs into a heavy 4 quart pot, then cook over medium heat until the meat is lightly brown, about 5 minutes. Pour in the wine and continue cooking until it is reduced by half. Remove the seeds from the tomatoes, then roughly chop them. When the wine has reduced, add the tomatoes to the pot along with their juice and the tomato paste. When the ragu has come to a boil turn the flame down and simmer, uncovered, very slowly for 1 1/2 to 2 hours, skimming the fat from the surface from time to time. Should the ragu become too dry before the end of the cooking period, add a little water to adjust the consistency. Season with salt and freshly ground black pepper, then set aside until ready to use.

To make the garganelli:

1 cup all purpose flour
1/2 cup semolina flour
3 whole eggs

Mix the all purpose and semolina flour together in a bowl. Make a well in the center of the flour, break in the eggs and begin mixing the eggs and flour together. When the dough comes together in a mass, knead it until the texture is smooth and silky. Roll the dough with a pasta machine in progressively thinner settings until the thinnest setting is reached. Lightly flour the pasta sheet and fold it over onto itself three or four times. Cut the dough into 1 1/4 to 1 1/2 inch squares.

Have on hand a 1/4 inch round dowel 6 or 7 inches long and a large comb with teeth at least 1 1/2 inches long. Place the comb on a table with the teeth facing away from you. Place a pasta square on the comb with one corner pointing toward you. Place the dowel on the square and parallel to the comb. Curl the corner of the pasta square around the dowel and with gentle pressure roll the pasta around the dowel and off the comb making a tube with a lightly ridged surface. Tap the garganelli off the dowel onto a floured sheet pan and continue with the rest of the pasta squares in the same manner.

The garganelli can be cooked immediately or allowed to dry in the open air for a day, in which case they will keep indefinitely.

To assemble the dish:

Cook the garganelli in plenty of salted, boiling water. The time will depend on whether the pasta is fresh (as little as one minute) or dry (up to 7 or 8 minutes). In the meantime heat the ragu and adjust the seasoning. When the pasta is cooked add it to the ragu, mix well and spoon into a serving dish. Pass freshly grated parmesan cheese on the side.

Serves 6.

Symbolic meanings of the ingredients:

- pheasant: one of the most sexually active birds; sacred to Venus
- onion: a plant of the Moon suitable for spells to affect the emotions; also a blood purifier
- celery: another Lunar plant
- carrot: a phallic-shaped plant of attraction (orange color)
- basil: to attract love and good fortune
- rosemary: a plant of the Sun, used for protection, concentration and memory
- red wine: the color red for life energy, the intoxicant for the God of ecstasy
- tomatoes: a plant of Venus, for sexual potency and love energy
- flour: for the Earth Goddess
- eggs: symbols of life

Magickal uses for the dish:

Obviously, with all the sexual connotations of its ingredients, this would be a perfect dish to serve a lover to attract and deepen a happy sexual relationship. But beware! The eggs and flour are symbols of fruitfulness, so this relationship may be a productive one. If you aren't interested in having a child, take precautions, and have the intent that the productivity in the relationship express itself in other ways.

This recipe states "serves six"--this is assuming it's used as the pasta course in a big multi-course dinner. For Magickal purposes, I'd use the garganelli as a main dish, keeping it for two people, and serving it with a simple salad of lettuce (the Moon), tomatoes (Venus), onions (the Moon), cucumber (phallic plant, the Moon again), dressed with olive oil (Venus) dressing. Follow up with a home-baked apple pie spiced with cardamom, and you have the love-feast of the Gods.....vw

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Lo Scrino di Pero e Castagne

Pastry "jewel box" with pear and chestnut cream

[This recipe was demonstrated at the Chefs' Holiday at the Ahwahnee Hotel in Yosemite National Park. A purist would have you make the puff pastry from scratch, but it's okay to buy it--just don't haggle over the price--vw]

To poach the pears:

3 large pears (Anjou or Bartlett)

1 cup fresh orange juice

1 1/2 cup sugar

3 cups water

2 sticks cinnamon

4 cloves

Put the orange juice, sugar, water, cinnamon and cloves into a stock pot. Peel the pears. Cut them in half and remove the stems and cores. Place the pears in the solution and bring to a boil, then turn down the heat and simmer until tender. Remove the pears with a slotted spoon and drain over paper towels.

To make the chestnut cream:

4 ounces unsalted butter
4 ounces sugar
2 large eggs
4 ounces chestnut unsweetened chestnut puree
2 teaspoons vanilla extract

Cream the butter and sugar until light and fluffy. Add the eggs and mix until blended. Add the chestnut puree and vanilla and beat until smooth.

To make the mocha sauce:

2 cups milk
1/4 cup strong coffee
1 vanilla bean
6 large egg yolks
1/2 cup sugar

Bring the milk, coffee and vanilla bean to a boil. Keep it hot. Combine the egg yolks and sugar in a bowl and beat over a double boiler until thick. Add the milk to the egg mixture and set aside to cool, stirring every few minutes.

To assemble the dessert:

Purchase one pound of puff pastry at your local pastry shop or grocery store. Roll the puff pastry to the dimension of 24 x 16 inches. With a sharp knife, cut six 7 inch circles. Cut six 8 1/2 inch strips from the remaining dough.

Place about 1 1/2 oz. of the chestnut cream in the center of each circle. Place a pear on top of the filling and sprinkle the pear with 1/2 teaspoon of ground cinnamon. Wrap each pear in the puff pastry, creating a sack. With the puff pastry strips, make a decorative tie around the neck of the sack.

Preheat oven to 400 degrees. Egg wash the puff pastry and sprinkle with sugar. Bake the sacks until golden brown, about 40 minutes. When done, set aside to cool. To serve, ladle the mocha sauce onto six cold plates and place the sacks in the center of the plates.

Magickal significance of the recipe:

- pear: a sweet fruit of Venus, planet of love and prosperity
- orange juice: solar fruit of attraction, prosperity

- cinnamon: solar spice of money, creativity; a stimulant
- cloves: solar spice used in love spells
- chestnut: Most nuts are of the element Earth; traditionally connected with the search for wisdom (the nutmeat being a highly-concentrated source of nutrition which is only achieved after peeling off the outer layers)
- vanilla: a sweet-tasting spice of Venus, derived from the seed pods of tropical orchids
- coffee: a stimulant of Mercurial (mental) effect

..which gives us what? A spell of combined wishes for increased prosperity which comes as the result of one's own creative work, and for the wisdom to use it properly when it arrives. A good chant to do while wrapping the pears in the pastry would be:

"Prosperity, come to me,

Prosperity that I have earned,

So I may use what I have learned,

As I do will, so mote it be."

Share the goodies with your friends: what goes around, comes around. <

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Hail To the Chef

Magickal Recipes of Ron Miller

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Gnocchi alla romana con funghi e carciofi

Semolina gnocchi with mushrooms and artichokes

1 quart milk

1 cup semolina flour

1 cup freshly grated Parmesan cheese

2 teaspoons salt

2 egg yolks

1/4 cup butter

1/2 pound shiitake mushrooms

8 - 10 small artichokes, sometimes called artichoke hearts

2 tablespoons chopped parsley

1 lemon

Bring the milk to a boil in a heavy saucepan. As it is coming to a boil add the semolina in a steady stream, beating it into the milk with a whisk. Lower the heat and continue beating until the semolina begins to come away from the edges of the pan (about 10 minutes). Remove from the heat. Beat in 2/3 cup of the grated cheese, the egg yolks and 2 tablespoons of butter.

Moisten a sheetpan with cold water and pour out the semolina. Spread the mixture to a thickness of about 3/8 inch. Cover with wax paper or parchment and let the semolina cool completely (about 30 to 40 minutes).

Preheat the oven to 450 degrees.

Using a 1-1/2 pastry cutter, cut the semolina into disks. Trim the bottoms and outer

leaves of the artichokes, rubbing the cut surfaces with lemon. Boil in salted water until tender. When cool slice into 1/4 inch slices. Remove the stems from the shiitakes and slice into 1/4 inch slices. Saute the mushrooms and artichokes in 3 tablespoons of butter with the chopped parsley, salt and pepper and set aside to cool.

Butter an oven proof casserole large enough to hold the semolina disks, artichokes and mushrooms in one layer. Put the four sided pieces of semolina into the bottom of the casserole. Dot with butter and sprinkle with parmesan. Over this arrange one line of semolina disks along one edge of the casserole. Arrange some artichokes and mushrooms slightly overlapping the first line of disks. Lay a second line of disks overlapping the artichokes and mushrooms. Continue in this fashion until you have reach the other edge of the casserole. Sprinkle with the remaining parmesan and dot with butter. Place on the highest rack of the oven and cook for 15 to 20 minutes until a light golden crust has formed on top.

[This is WONderful! But aside from being a real palate-pleaser, you can use this recipe as a spell for growth--not merely because it's kinda fattening (all that butter!), but because of the mushrooms. In fact, this spell can be used for anything you want to happen quickly. Check it out:

- milk (makes us grow when we're babies)
- semolina flour (straight from Mama Earth to you for increase)
- cheese (more milk)
- salt (of the earth)
- egg yolks (another growth symbol; also a symbol of the Universe)
- butter (still more milk)
- mushrooms (grow up FAST overnight)
- artichoke hearts (the center portion of a thistle-like plant whose leaves grow spirally [growth again!])
- parsley (relaxation, concentration, memory)
- lemon (a Lunar fruit)

Put them all together, and you have a recipe which would work well for personal growth, successful conception, prosperity, the success of a project, good crops, even healing. The way you differentiate these is, of course, in your intent as you make the dish, and in the words you chant. For instance, if you wanted to use this as a spell for the successful completion of an artistic project, you would envision yourself getting the benefits and praises due to your success, and you would chant something to the effect of:

"Grow, grow, juices flow
As above, so below."
Bon appetit and Blessed Be!--vw]

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Rombo al forno con patate al rosmarino

Halibut filet encrusted with potatoes and rosemary

2 1/2 pounds halibut filet

2 medium russet potatoes

2 sprigs rosemary

red wine

12 oz. extra virgin olive oil

salt and pepper

Preheat the oven to 450 degrees.

Trim the halibut filet and cut into 6 oz. portions. Using a mandoline or electric slicer, slice the potatoes into translucently thin slices. Wash the potato slices twice and keep in water until ready to use. Coarsely chop the rosemary.

Lightly coat the bottom of an ovenproof baking dish with olive oil. Season the halibut filets and place them in the dish, being careful not to crowd the filets. Cover each portion of halibut with potato slices, slightly overlapping each slice. Sprinkle the rosemary on top of the potato slices. Pour the wine into the baking dish and place in the upper third of the oven for 12 -15 minutes until the potatoes are tender. To finish the dish, put the fish under a broiler for a moment to lightly brown the upper edges of the potato slices. Place each filet on warm serving plates and pour over 1 1/2 to 2 oz. of olive oil. Garnish with crisply fried artichoke hearts and zucchini sauteed in olive oil.

Serves 6.

[What kind of Magick can you do with this dish? It's a marriage of the stability of Earth (potatoes) and the flow of Ocean (halibut), with rosemary for remembrance, protection, and concentration, and olive oil for love. This would be good for maintaining a good, loving, long-term relationship, or for celebrating the hopes for this relationship or its accomplishment over the years. Wedding feasts and anniversaries -- and also for a celebratory meal to salute the spirit of old friends who have passed to the Summerland. Share it with your family, the more generations the better. You know the words to say -- just tell them you love and honor them. --vw]

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Fricassea d'Astasco con Finocchio

Lobster fricassee with fennel

4 live Maine lobsters, 1 1/4 to 1 1/2 pounds

- 1 carrot, chopped
- 1 onion, chopped
- 1/2 cup white wine vinegar
- 4 bay leaves
- 12 black peppercorns

Bring 4 quarts water to a boil in a large pot with the carrots, onions, vinegar and herbs. After the vegetables have cooked for 10 minutes, plunge the lobsters into the court bouillon and cook for 5 minutes after the water has returned to a boil. Refresh the lobsters in cold water. When the lobsters are cold remove the meat from the tail, claws and knuckles. Reserve the shells and head for the sauce.

To make the sauce:

- 1 small onion, chopped
- 4 cloves garlic, smashed
- 3 tablespoons olive oil
- 3 or 2 sprigs fresh tarragon
- 1 bay leaf
- 2 tablespoons fennel seed
- 6 black peppercorns
- 1 cup white wine
- 1/4 cup brandy
- 3 cups chicken stock
- 1 1/2 tablespoons butter
- 1 tablespoon all purpose flour

In a large saucepan saute the onions and garlic in the olive oil. When the onions turn transparent, add the herbs and the reserved lobster shells and heads, crushing them with a wooden spoon. Add the white wine and brandy and boil until the liquid has reduced by half. Add the chicken stock and simmer for about 30 minutes. In a separate saucepan melt the butter over low heat; then stir in the flour. Cook the roux for two minutes, stirring constantly. Strain the hot lobster stock into the roux and reduce until the sauce is very lightly thickened. There should be about 1 cup of sauce.

To assemble the dish:

- 1 large fennel bulb
- 1 carrot
- 2 tablespoons fennel leaf, chopped
- 1/4 cup butter

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees.

Trim the fennel and poach in water for 10 to 15 minutes until tender. Cut the carrot into julienne strips and blanch for 30 seconds. Quarter the fennel, cut out the core and slice each quarter into 4 pieces. Slice the lobster tails into 5 or 6 medallions. Put the fennel, carrot and all the lobster meat into an ovenproof casserole large enough to hold all the

ingredients in one layer. Bring the sauce to a boil. Add the chopped fennel leaf and the butter, stirring until the butter melts into the sauce and the sauce is lightly thickened. Pour the sauce over the lobster, cover with wax paper or parchment and place in the oven for 10 to 12 minutes until the lobster is warmed through. Arrange on plates in a decorative fashion and serve. Serves 4 people.

[This dish is one which can be used as a love spell, as can just about any spell using fish or other sea creatures. The fennel is a love philtre component as well as a protective herb and one used for creative mental spells. The tarragon is both protective and a relaxing herb. Carrots, being phallic in shape and the orange of attraction in color, lend themselves well to the overlying theme of love or lust, as do the olive oil of Venus and the onions of the Moon.

Be sure to thank the lobsters for the sacrifice of their lives; this is a good policy to follow when eating any live thing, be it animal or vegetable.--vw]

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Pasta alla Puttanesca

["Pasta alla Puttanesca" translates to "Whores' Pasta." It seems appropriate for Beltaine -- vw]

1 pound dried pasta

1/4 cup extra virgin olive oil

3 cloves garlic, finely chopped

3 anchovy fillets, finely chopped 6 tomatoes, peeled, seeded and chopped (or 1 14 oz. can Italian plum tomatoes)

1 cup pitted black or green olives

4 tablespoons capers

4 tablespoons chopped fresh parsley

salt and freshly ground black pepper

Cook the pasta in a large pot of boiling, salted water until it is al dente.

While the water for the pasta is heating, heat the olive oil in a large heavy skillet. Add the garlic and anchovies and cook gently until they are almost melted, about 5 minutes. Stir in the chopped tomatoes (if using canned tomatoes add the juice also), olives and capers. Cook for another 5 minutes. Add the chopped parsley and season to taste with salt and freshly ground black pepper.

When the pasta is ready, drain it and toss with the sauce. Serve immediately.

Serves six.

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Warm Goat Cheese rolled in Pistachios with Fennel and Blood Oranges

2 Crotin de Chavignol or 1 7 oz. log of Montrachet goat cheese

1 large fennel bulb, thinly sliced

1 medium red onion, thinly sliced

1/4 cup extra virgin olive oil

3 tablespoons hazelnut oil
3 tablespoons sherry vinegar
1/2 teaspoon chopped garlic
salt and pepper to taste
4 tablespoons fennel leaf, chopped
1/2 cup coarsely chopped pistachio nuts
2 blood oranges, peeled and segmented

If you can find it, Crotin de Chavignol is the ideal cheese for a warm dish. It is a slightly aged, white cylinder weighing about three ounces. A dry cheese, it slices well and does not melt in the hot oven as easily as the creamier Montrachet. If you are using the Crotin de Chavignol, slice each cylinder in half to make two disks. Dip each disk in the olive oil used to dress the fennel, coat with the chopped pistachios and chill in the refrigerator until ready to serve. Preheat the oven to 350 degrees. If using the Montrachet, allow one to one and one half ounce per person. Coat each portion with chopped pistachios and leave at room temperature until ready to serve. Preheat the oven to 300 degrees.

Toss the sliced fennel and onion with the olive oil, hazelnut oil, sherry vinegar and garlic. Season to taste with salt and pepper. Set aside at room temperature to marinate for at least one hour.

To serve: Warm the goat cheese in the preheated oven for about five to seven minutes. In the meantime, make a thin bed of the fennel and onions on four plates. Sprinkle with the chopped fennel leaf. Arrange the blood orange segments on the fennel, radiating from the middle. Place the warm goat cheese in the middle of each plate. Decorate with a sprig of fennel leaf and serve.

Serves 4.

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Hail To the Chef

Magickal Recipes of Ron Miller

reprinted from the Compost NewsLetter

[These recipes appeared in the Compost NewsLetter during 1990-92, while Ron was the executive chef of the Ristorante Donatello in San Francisco. All Magickal interpretations and comments are by Valerie Walker.]

Chilled Cucumber and Dill Soup with Beet Mousseline

1 large onion, peeled and sliced

3 tablespoons peanut oil

4 tablespoons chopped fresh dill, about 5 or 6 sprigs

2 cups rich, gelatinous chicken stock

4 English hothouse cucumbers, peeled, seeded and cut into 1/2 chunks

2 tablespoons lemon juice

1 8 oz. tub of sour cream

2 large beetroots

1/2 cup water

2 tablespoons balsamic vinegar

1/4 cup heavy cream, whipped until stiff

salt and ground white pepper to taste

To make the soup:

Remove the dill leaf from the stems. Chop the dill fine and reserve to be added to the soup when it has chilled. Coarsely chop the stems. Place the stems, the sliced onion and peanut oil in a large heavy pot over a low flame. Cook gently until the onion has turned transparent, about 10 minutes. Add the chicken stock and lemon juice. Bring to a boil, turn the flame down and simmer for 10 to 15 minutes. Add the cucumbers to the simmering liquid in the pot. Return to a boil and simmer for another 10 minutes. Puree the soup in a blender and strain into a storage container. When the soup has cooled to room temperature, stir in the sour cream and the chopped dill. Season to taste with salt and pepper.

Refrigerate for at least 2 hours before serving.

To make the beet mousseline:

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees.

Trim the stem and root ends from the beets. Place the beets and 1/2 cup of water into a casserole with a heavy, tight-fitting lid. Cook, covered, in the preheated oven until tender, about 1 to 1 1/2 hours. Set aside to cool. When the beets are cold, peel them and cut into quarters. Puree the beets in a food processor or a blender with the balsamic vinegar. Fold the whipped cream into the beet puree. Season with a pinch of salt and pepper and refrigerate until ready to serve.

To serve:

Ladle the soup into chilled bowls. Place a large dollop (about 2 heaping tablespoons) of beet mousseline into the center of each serving. Garnish with a sprig of dill and serve.

Serves 6.

[Magickal uses of this recipe: use for a self-healing and visualization of your own inner beauty and to attract love into your life. Cucumber for peace and healing, beets for love and beauty, onions for protection, dill for love, milk for love--vw]

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Oven Roasted Salmon coated with Pumpkinseeds on Sauteed Apples, Calvados Butter Sauce

[a dish featuring the salmon of wisdom, the apples of the Goddess, and the seeds of the solar pumpkin... what kind of spell suggests itself? Think about it--vw]

1-1/2 pounds salmon filet cut into four portions, 6 oz. each
8 oz. raw pumpkin seeds
2 Granny Smith or Pippin apples
pinch of nutmeg and cinnamon
4 large shallots
1 sprig fresh thyme
1 bay leaf
6 black peppercorns
1-1/4 cup Calvados (apple brandy)
1 cup dry white wine
1/4 cup heavy cream
8 oz. chilled unsalted butter cut into cubes
salt and ground white pepper to taste
1/4 cup peanut oil

Toast the pumpkin seeds in a 350 degree oven for about 10 to 15 minutes. When cool, coarsely chop in a food processor and set aside.

Peel, quarter and core the apples. Slice the quarters across to make 1/8 inch thick pieces. Melt two ounces of butter in a heavy skillet. When foaming add the apples and saute for 4 -5 minutes with the nutmeg, cinnamon and 1/4 cup of the Calvados. The apples should be cooked but still crisp. Set aside until ready to serve.

To make the sauce:

Slice the shallots and cook gently with a little butter in a heavy one or two quart sauce pan until they turn translucent. Add the thyme, bay leaf, peppercorns, Calvados and the white wine. Bring to a boil and reduce at high heat until only 3 or 4 tablespoons of liquid remain. Add the cream to the pan. When the cream comes to a boil turn the heat down to medium and begin adding the cold butter, one or two pieces at a time, stirring constantly with a wire whisk. When all the butter has been incorporated into the sauce remove from the heat and season to taste with salt and pepper. Strain into a metal container and keep warm until ready to serve.

To assemble the dish:

Preheat oven to 400 degrees.

Coat the salmon filets with the chopped pumpkin seeds, pressing them into the salmon so that they will adhere to the filets. Heat one or two large skillets with oven proof handles over moderately high flame. Choose pans large enough so that the salmon is not crowded in the pan. When the pans are hot add the peanut oil and then the salmon. Cook on one side for 2 to 3 minutes until the pumpkin seeds are lightly browned. Turn the salmon over and put the pans into the preheated oven. Cook for 8 to 10 minutes depending on the thickness of the filets. The salmon is done when the filets are just pink in the middle.

While the salmon is cooking, gently warm the cooked apples in either a skillet or

microwave oven. Make a small bed of the apples on four warm plates. When the salmon is done, place a filet on each bed of apples and surround with the sauce. Garnish with rice and vegetable of your choice.

Serves 4.

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The Yule Feast

[Tired of the same old turkey? Here's Ron's Italianate take on the Yule feast, first featured in Wine Country Magazine. I think you can figure out the Magickal purposes for each of the dishes: celebration of the sun's return, hopes of spring, and getting together to enjoy the feast with those you love. A somewhat classier version of Food, Folks & Fun, in other words. All recipes serve six people except for the dessert by Marianne Young, which serves ten. Bon appetit and Blessed Be!--vw]

- Baby Beet and String Bean Salad with a Balsamic Vinaigrette
- Quadrucci with Parsley in Lobster Broth
- Loin of Lamb Stuffed with Caponata in Black Olive Sauce
- Chocolate Caramel Pine Nut Tureen with Bitter Chocolate Sauce (recipe by Marianne Young, former pastry chef, Ristorante Donatello)

Baby Beet and String Bean Salad with a Balsamic Vinaigrette

2 or 3 bunches of baby chiodia, golden or red beets (approximately 36 beets in all 1 inch in diameter)

8 oz. small tender green beans

1 Texas or Maui sweet onion

3 heads baby red romaine or red oak leaf lettuce

6 sprigs flat leaf Italian parsley

6 tablespoons balsamic vinegar

1/4 cup extra virgin olive oil

salt and white pepper

Trim the stems and roots from the beets and cook them in lightly salted water for 10 to 15 minutes until they are tender. Refresh under cold water, then peel the skin from the beets, quarter them and toss them in a bowl with 2 tablespoons of the balsamic vinegar, 4 tablespoons of the olive oil and salt and pepper. Set aside.

Trim the ends from the green beans. If they are large, trim them to 1 1/2 to 2 inch lengths, then plunge them into boiling salted water for 1 to 2 minutes until they are just tender. Refresh the beans in ice water, drain and toss them separately with 2 tablespoons of balsamic vinegar, 4 tablespoons of olive oil and salt and pepper, and set aside.

Peel and quarter the onion. Slice one of the quarters crosswise into paper-thin slices and set aside; reserve the rest of the onion for another purpose.

Pluck the leaves from the parsley stems leaving them whole and set aside. Cut the lettuce leaves from the root ends, then wash and dry the leaves.

To assemble the salad, place 3 leaves of lettuce on chilled salad plates radiating from the center of the plate. Place 3 small bundles of green beans between each lettuce leaf. At the last moment, toss the beets with the onion slices and parsley leaves, then mound them in the center of the plate. Drizzle 1 teaspoon or so of olive oil and 1/2 teaspoon of balsamic vinegar over the lettuce leaves and green bean bundles, making decorative and tasty pools.

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Quadrucchi with Parsley in Lobster Broth

To cook the lobster:

2 live Maine lobsters, 1 1/4 to 1 1/2 pounds each

1 onion, peeled and roughly chopped

1 rib celery, roughly chopped

1 small leek, roughly chopped

12 black peppercorns

2 bay leaves

2 or 3 sprigs thyme
1/2 cup white wine vinegar
4 quarts water

Bring the water to a boil in a large pot with the onion, celery, leek, herbs and vinegar. Let it cook for 15 minutes. With the court bouillon at a high boil, plunge the live lobsters into it. Cook for 8-10 minutes, then remove the lobsters to a cold water bath to stop the cooking process. Discard the court bouillon. When the lobsters are cool, separate the tails and claws from the head, reserving the juices from the lobster. Remove the meat from the claws and split 3 claws lengthwise so there are 6 halves resembling a whole claw. Remove the shell from the tails and slice the tails across into 6 medallions each. Dice the fourth claw. Wrap the lobster meat and refrigerate until later. Reserve the heads and shells for the broth.

For the broth:

1 onion, quartered
1 small carrot, peeled and cut into 1 inch pieces
1 small leek, roughly chopped
3 cloves garlic
1 tomato, quartered
6 sprigs tarragon
1/2 bunch Italian parsley
1 oz. fresh chervil
6 black peppercorns
1 bay leaf
2 cups white wine
1 cup brandy
3 egg whites
1 quart chicken stock, chilled
the reserved heads, tails and juice from the lobsters

With a large chef's knife chop the lobster heads and shells into 5 or 6 pieces. Place them in a food processor with all the juices, the vegetables, herbs and egg whites. Process until the mixture is liquid and the vegetables and lobster pieces are quite small, approximately 1 minute. Put this mixture into a large heavy pot with the wine, brandy and chilled chicken stock. Put the pot over a medium flame and slowly bring to a simmer, stirring often during this time to prevent the egg whites from settling to the bottom of the pot and burning. When the broth has come to a simmer, punch a hole in the raft that has formed on the surface to allow the broth to breathe. Cook at a slow simmer for 45 minutes, ladling a little of the broth over the raft every once in a while so that it will filter through and increase the flavor. When it has finished cooking, strain carefully through cheesecloth and set aside. The resulting broth will be crystal clear and quite aromatic.

For the quadrucci:

1 cup all purpose flour

1/2 cup semolina flour
3 whole eggs
1 bunch flat leaf italian parsley

Mix the all-purpose and semolina flour together in a bowl. Make a well in the center of the flour, break in the eggs and begin mixing the eggs and flour together. When the dough comes together in a mass, knead it until the texture is smooth and silky. Roll the dough with a pasta machine in progressively thinner settings until the thinnest setting is reached. Divide the dough in half. Place parsley leaves on one half, place the other half on top and roll once more through the machine at the thinnest setting. Cut the quadrucci into approximately 1 3/4 inch to 2 inch squares. Allow two quadrucci per serving. Refrigerate in a single layer on a floured sheetpan until ready to cook.

To assemble the dish:

Peel seed and cut into a tiny dice 1 small tomato. Bring the broth to a boil, season with salt and white pepper then add the diced tomato. Warm the lobster medallions and claws separately in a little of the broth. Cook the quadrucci in a large quantity of water until tender, about 3 to 4 minutes. When the quadrucci are cooked drain them and place one into the bottom of a shallow soup plate, off center. Place two lobster medallions and a little of the chopped claw into the center of the quadrucci, then cover with the second quadrucci. Put the half claw toward one side of the plate, then ladle in just enough of the hot broth to cover the claw and quadrucci and serve.

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Loin of Lamb Stuffed with Caponata in Black Olive Sauce

For the caponata:

1 green zucchini
1 yellow zucchini
1 red bell pepper
1 yellow bell pepper
2 Japanese eggplants
3 cloves garlic, minced
1/2 cup pine nuts, toasted
extra virgin olive oil
salt and black pepper

Make a fine dice of the green and yellow zucchini, mix together and set aside. Make a fine dice of the red and yellow bell pepper, mix together and set aside. Make a fine dice of the japanese eggplant. Heat a heavy skillet over high heat until it is very hot. Saute the eggplant in the olive oil with 1/3 of the garlic and salt and pepper until just cooked, about 3 to 4 minutes. Put the eggplant into a colander over a bowl to drain the excess liquid. Repeat this process with the zucchini and bell peppers adding each to the eggplant in the colander. When all the vegetables have been sauteed, add the toasted

pine nuts and mix together to marry the flavors; adjust the seasoning, then set aside to cool.

To stuff the lamb:

Bone 1 saddle of lamb and trim the silver skin and membranes completely from each loin. With a long thin knife, cut a pocket in each loin, starting from the thin end of the loin. The pocket should be cut the entire length of the loin and extend from one edge to the other without cutting through. Put the cooled caponata into the a pastry bag without a tip and pipe the caponata into the pocket of each loin, working it down with the fingers. When the pocket is filled, secure the open end with a wooden toothpick or short skewer.

For the fried risotto timbales:

Cook two cups of arborio rice according to package directions for risotto, finishing with butter and parmesan cheese. Coat six 8 oz. custard cups with olive oil and fill each half full with the hot risotto. Cool and refrigerate until ready.

For the sauce:

the bone from the saddle, chopped into 2 inch pieces

meat scraps from the flaps of the saddle

4 shallots, roughly chopped

2 garlic cloves, smashed with the flat of a knife

2 sprigs fresh thyme

6 black peppercorns

2 bay leaves

1 small jar nicoise olives

2 cups madeira

1 quart lamb or veal stock

2 tablespoons cornstarch

Pit and cut in half 36 olives and set aside to garnish the dish. Drain the rest of the olives; reserve the brine. Roast the lamb bones 40 to 50 minutes until they are nicely browned. Brown the meat scraps in a sauce pot large enough to hold both the stock and bones together. When the meat is well browned turn down the flame, add the shallots, garlic and herbs and continue cooking until the shallots are golden brown. Add the drained olives to the pot and deglaze with the madeira. Reduce the madeira by two thirds, then add the stock and the browned bones. Bring the sauce to a simmer, skim well and set to cook at a very slow simmer for 1 hour or more, skimming often, until the sauce has reduced and the flavor has developed sufficiently. Toward the end of the reduction, adjust the flavor of the sauce if necessary by adding a little of the olive brine to heighten the flavor. Dissolve the cornstarch in a little water and add just enough to thicken the sauce to make a light jus. Strain the sauce through a fine mesh strainer, adjust the seasoning and keep the sauce warm until it is time to serve.

To assemble the dish:

Preheat the oven to 400 degrees. Heat a large ovenproof skillet until it is very hot.

Season the lamb loins and brown on each side about 2 minutes. Put the loins in the

preheated oven to cook for 8 to 10 minutes. The meat should be pink and the caponata just warmed through. Meanwhile, unmold the risotto timbales. Heat two tablespoons butter in an ovenproof skillet until the butter is light brown. Place the risotto timbales, smooth side down, into the skillet, cover and cook in the oven for 10 minutes until the risotto is heated through and the bottom surface is golden brown. Warm the olive halves in the sauce. Place the fried risotto timbales in the center of warm dinner plates, golden side up. Slice each loin across into 18 thin slices placing six slices on each plate radiating from the center out and slightly atop the risotto. Spoon the sauce around the lamb, garnish with the olives and serve.

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Chocolate Caramel Pine Nut Tureen with a Bitter Chocolate Sauce
recipe thanks to Marianne Young, former pastry chef, Ristorante Donatello

For the caramel pine nuts:

1 1/2 pound sugar
1 pound toasted pine nuts
6 drops lemon juice
3/4 cup water

Combine sugar, water and lemon juice in a very clean, heavy saucepan. There must be no residue of any kind in the pan. Gently stir the mixture together so it resembles wet sand. Using a brush, wash down the sides of the pan with water and put covered, over medium high heat. Leave on the fire for 5 minutes, untouched. Carefully check the sugar, and when it reaches a golden color remove from the heat. Immediately place the pot in an ice bath to stop the cooking. Fold in toasted pine nuts and pour onto oiled parchment paper. Let cool until hard. Break the brittle into pieces, reserve 1/4 for decoration and process the rest in a food processor until it is finely chopped. Set aside.

For the terrine:

2 oz. creme de cacao liquor
10 oz. bittersweet chocolate, chopped
2 oz. butter
3 egg yolks
1 whole egg
1 oz. sugar
1 cup cream

Melt the chocolate, butter and liquor over a double boiler that is just simmering. While the chocolate is melting whip the cream and set aside. Combine the eggs and sugar together in a mixer and whip until it is very light and foamy and has tripled in volume. Continually stir the chocolate until all of the pieces have melted. This mixture should just be warm. If it is too hot, stir to cool. Fold the chocolate into the egg mixture. Combine thoroughly, then fold in the whipped cream and crushed caramel pine nuts. Place the mixture into a terrine mold or parchment lined loaf pan. Place in a freezer to set.

overnight.

For the bitter chocolate sauce:

1 pound bittersweet chocolate, chopped

1 1/2 cups milk

1 1/2 oz. unsweetened cocoa powder

Melt the chocolate in a double boiler. Bring the milk to a boil, stir it into the cocoa, then add the melted chocolate. Blend well and strain through a fine sieve. Keep warm until ready to serve.

To assemble the dessert:

Unmold the terrine. Slice the terrine to the desired width with a knife dipped in hot water and place the slice on a chilled dessert plate. Spoon the bitter chocolate sauce over one corner of the terrine. Make a rosette of whipped cream and place a piece of the reserved caramel pinenut brittle on the top for decoration.

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Braised seabass with tomatoes and artichokes

1 1/2 lb. filet of seabass

8 italian plum tomatoes, peeled, seeded and diced

8 baby artichokes (artichoke hearts), trimmed, cooked and quartered

6 sprigs fresh basil, chopped

1/4 cup white wine

1/2 cup extra virgin olive oil

1 lemon

Preheat oven to 400 degrees.

Trim the seabass filets and cut into four portions of about 6 oz. each. Coat the bottom of an oven-proof dish with olive oil. Season the seabass filets with salt and pepper and put them into the dish with the white wine. Cover the filets with the diced tomatoes and then arrange the artichoke quarters on top. Cook the seabass in the preheated oven for 10-15 minutes. Place the filets on warm plates. Sprinkle them with the chopped basil and three or four tablespoons of olive oil and serve. Serves 4.

[This one is so easy to interpret for Magickal elements, I'm almost ashamed to do it for

you. Okay, for the beginners: fish, representing the ocean, home of Aphrodite; tomatoes, formerly known as "love-apples" and reputed to be aphrodisiac; olive oil, also sacred to the Love Goddess; basil, sacred in the Voudon tradition to the goddess Erzulie---need I go on? Obviously, a love-spell. And the artichoke hearts? Well, I'm not sure to whom or what they are dedicated, but you don't have to possess too much imagination to figure it out: hearts, get it? Perfect for Valentine's Day (which just happens to be the birthday of our loveable and talented Chef), and so much less fattening than a box of chocolates...vw]

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Monkfish with Dried Tomatoes and Hazelnuts

12 to 14 pounds monkfish filet

2 medium onions, chopped

12 garlic cloves, chopped

1/4 cup peanut oil

18 Roma tomatoes, peeled, seeded and quartered

4 oz. dried tomato halves

2 cups hazelnut oil

2 oz. dried tomato julienne strips, softened in boiling water for two minutes

salt and pepper to taste

2 cups hazelnuts, toasted, peeled and coarsely chopped

Sweat the onion and garlic in the peanut oil until transparent. Add the Roma tomatoes and dried tomato halves. Bring to a boil and simmer gently for 20 to 30 minutes until the juices have reduced and the flavors concentrated. Transfer the contents to a blender and while blending at high speed, slowly add the hazelnut oil. Strain into a bain marie container. Season to taste with salt and pepper, add the softened julienne strips of dried tomato and keep warm until ready to serve.

Trim the monkfish filets and slice into 2 oz. medallions. Gently flatten the medallions between two sheets of plastic. Allow 3 medallions per serving. Season the monkfish medallions and saute in very hot peanut oil for 2 to 3 minutes on each side. Allow them to brown well before turning.

Ladle some of the sauce onto a plate. Drain the cooked monkfish medallions and arrange them on top of the sauce. Garnish with vegetable of choice, sprinkle with chopped hazelnuts and serve.

Serves 24.

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Quail egg ravioli with wild game sauce

[This dish was demonstrated at one of the Saturday Chef's Specials in the basement of

Macy's department store -- a pretty complicated dish to prepare on the fly, but the Chef managed it, and a good time was had by all... before the food ran out.--vw]

As an appetizer, allow three or four ravioli per person. Serves six.

For the ravioli filling:

1/4 olive oil

1 chicken breast, skinned and cut into small pieces

6 quail, boned, the meat cut into small pieces

2 cloves garlic, minced

1/2 medium onion, diced

1/4 cup white wine

1 bunch spinach, stems removed and washed

1 small head radicchio, cut across into 1/2 wide pieces

6 leaves fresh sage, finely chopped

1/8 teaspoon nutmeg

zest of one lemon, grated

4 tablespoons mascarpone

2 ounces fontina, grated

salt and pepper

Saute the chicken and quail meat in the olive oil over medium flame for 2 minutes. Add the onion and garlic and saute for another 2 or 3 minutes until the onion becomes transparent. Deglaze with the white wine and reduce over high heat until the wine has nearly evaporated. Pour the mixture into a bowl and set aside to cool. Blanch the spinach in a large pot of salted water for 30 seconds. Refresh the spinach and squeeze out as much water as possible. Blanch the radicchio for one minute. Refresh the radicchio and squeeze out the water. Put the chicken and quail into a food processor and pulse until it is coarsely chopped. Add the spinach, radicchio, sage, nutmeg and grated lemon zest. Pulse until the mixture is finely chopped but not pureed. Put the mixture into a bowl and stir in the mascarpone and grated fontina cheese with salt and pepper to taste.

For the pasta:

1 cup all purpose flour

1/2 cup semolina flour

3 whole eggs

Mix the all purpose and semolina flour together in a bowl. Make a well in the center of the flour, break in the eggs and begin mixing the eggs and flour together. When the dough comes together in a mass, knead it until the texture is smooth and silky. Roll the dough with a pasta machine in progressively thinner settings until the thinnest setting is reached. Divide the sheet of dough in half.

To assemble the ravioli:

24 - 30 quail eggs

To guide you in placing the filling, use the blunt non-cutting side of a 2 1/2 inch round or fluted pastry cutter to make light indentations on one sheet of the pasta. Leave about 1/4 inch between each indentation. Fill a pastry bag with the filling. Pipe a ring of filling in the center of each indentation. Carefully break one quail egg into the center of each ravioli. Brush between each dollop of filling with water to lightly moisten the pasta sheet. Lay the second sheet of pasta over the first gently pressing around each mound of filling, being careful to force out any air bubbles. With the blunt end of another pastry cutter one size smaller than the first cutter, gently press down around each mound of filling to seal the two sheets of pasta together. Now, using the business end of the first pastry cutter, you may cut the raviolis from the main sheet of pasta dough. Place them on a floured sheet pan and lightly dust the tops with flour. Cover with plastic wrap and store in the refrigerator until ready to cook.

For the sauce:

1/2 pound venison shoulder or stew meat cut into 1 inch cubes
the bones from the quail
3 tablespoons peanut oil
1 medium onion, diced
1 carrot, diced
1 rib celery, diced
1 tablespoon tomato paste
12 juniper berries
12 whole black peppercorns
3 bay leaves
1 cup red wine
1/2 cup brandy
1 quart water
2 tablespoons butter
2 tablespoons all purpose flour

Heat a heavy 4 quart saucepot over high heat. When it is quite hot, add the oil to the pot and brown the venison meat and the quail bones. When they are nice and brown and a glaze has formed on the bottom of the pan, turn the flame down to medium and add the diced vegetables. Stirring often, cook the vegetables until they turn golden brown. Add the tomato paste and the herbs and stir them into the contents of the pot for 1 minute. Deglaze with the red wine and brandy and set the liquid to reduce over medium heat until it is reduced by one half. Add the water. When it has come to a boil, skim the sauce well and set it to simmer over very low heat for 3 to 4 hours. Add a little water occasionally to maintain the level of liquid well above the solids in the pot and skim from time to time. After the sauce has gently cooked for 3 or 4 hours you will have extracted all the flavor from the meat and bones. Put the butter into another saucepan and put the pan over medium heat until the butter begins to foam. Turn the heat down, add the flour and stir constantly until the flour browns lightly and produces a nut-like aroma. When the resulting roux has browned, strain the hot wild game sauce into it, pressing all the juices out of the meat and bones. Simmer the sauce for another 20 minutes. You should have about 2 cups of very lightly thickened sauce at this point. Strain the sauce and set

it aside until ready to serve. The sauce can be made one or two days in advance and refrigerated until ready to use.

To assemble the dish:

1/4 cup heavy cream

2 tablespoons unsalted butter

1/4 cup freshly grated parmesan cheese

Bring a large pot of salted water to a boil. Bring the wild game sauce slowly to a boil with the cream. When it has boiled, add the butter and parmesan cheese and stir until they have been incorporated. Adjust the seasoning. While the sauce is being finished cook the raviolis in the boiling water for 3 to 4 minutes. Be careful not to overcook the raviolis. The yolks of the quail eggs should be cooked but still liquid. When the raviolis are cooked, drain them and put them into the sauce. Spoon the raviolis onto warm plates, spoon the sauce over the raviolis and serve.

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Walnut Drop Cookies

5 oz. butter

1/4 teaspoon salt

1/3 cup sugar

1 1/2 teaspoon vanilla extract

4 oz. chopped walnuts, toasted

1 cup flour

Cream the butter, salt, sugar and vanilla. Add the chopped walnuts and flour and beat until combined. Pipe into a buttered and floured sheet pan. Bake at 350 degrees for about 10 to 15 minutes. Sprinkle the cookies with granulated sugar immediately upon removing them from the oven.

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Hail To the Chef

Magickal Recipes of Ron Miller

reprinted from the Compost NewsLetter

[These recipes appeared in the Compost NewsLetter during 1990-92, while Ron was the executive chef of the Ristorante Donatello in San Francisco. All Magickal interpretations and comments are by Valerie Walker.]

Black and White Pinwheel Pasta with Smoked Chicken

1 cup all-purpose flour

1/2 cup semolina flour

3 whole eggs

1 package squid ink, about 4 grams

1 smoked chicken, about 2 1/2 to 3 pounds

6 tablespoons chopped shallots

1 1/2 cups ricotta cheese
1/2 cup mascarpone
3 tablespoons dry sherry
2 teaspoons salt
1/2 teaspoon ground white pepper
2 cups dry white wine
2 quarts chicken stock
2 cups heavy cream
1 yard cheesecloth
3 tablespoons chopped chives

To make the pasta:

Mix the all-purpose and semolina flour together in a bowl. Make a well in the center of the flour, break in the eggs. Add the squid ink to the eggs. Begin mixing the eggs and flour together with a fork. When the dough comes together in a mass, knead it until the texture is smooth and silky, adding flour when necessary. Wrap in plastic and set aside at room temperature while you are making the filling.

To make the filling:

Remove the skin from the smoked chicken and discard. With your fingers, separate the meat from the bones. Reserve the bones for the sauce. Place the chicken meat and 3 tablespoons of the chopped shallots into the bowl of a food processor. Pulse until the meat is very finely chopped but not pureed. Mix the chopped meat with the ricotta cheese, mascarpone and sherry. Season to taste with salt and pepper.

To make the pinwheels:

Cut the ball of pasta dough into quarters. Roll one quarter of the dough in a pasta machine in progressively thinner settings until the thinnest setting is reached. The pasta sheet should be about 6 inches wide and 16 inches long. Set the pasta sheet aside, covered, and proceed with the other 3 quarters in the same manner.

Divide the filling between the pasta sheets. spread the filling about 1/16 inch thick over the length and width of each pasta sheet. Leave about 1 inch at the end of each sheet without filling. Roll each sheet of pasta into a cylinder, sealing the cylinders at the end of the pasta sheet that was left bare. You now have 4 pinwheel cylinders about 1 1/2 inches in diameter. Cut the cheesecloth into 4 pieces. Fold each piece in half. Roll each pinwheel in a piece of cheesecloth. Twist each end of the cheesecloth and tie with string. Gently tie each pinwheel in two places in the middle with string. Place the pinwheels into a pot large enough to accommodate them in one layer. Cover with 1 quart of the chicken stock. Bring the stock to a boil, then poach the pinwheels at a gentle simmer for 15 minutes. Remove from the heat and allow to cool in the stock to room temperature. When cool, wrap in plastic and refrigerate until ready to serve.

To make the sauce:

Place the reserved chicken bones, the white wine and 1 quart of the chicken stock into a large pot. Bring to a boil and reduce until about 2 cups of liquid remain. Add the cream

and simmer gently until the sauce thickens enough to coat a spoon. Strain the sauce. Season to taste with salt and pepper and keep warm until ready to serve.

To assemble the dish:

Preheat oven to 350 degrees.

Unwrap each pinwheel. Slice into disks about 1 inch thick. Place two pinwheel disks on each plate. Warm in the preheated oven for about 5 minutes. Surround with sauce.

Garnish with chopped chives and serve. Serves 8.

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Lasagne al ragu d'anatra

Lasagne with duck ragu

For the ragu:

1 medium onion, chopped

6 cloves garlic, chopped

4 tablespoons olive oil

1 pound duck leg meat, coarsely ground or chopped

1 tablespoon black peppercorns

2 bay leaves

6 sprigs fresh oregano, or 1 teaspoon dry oregano

6 sprigs fresh thyme, or 1 teaspoon dry thyme

3 cups canned plum tomatoes, roughly chopped with their juice

Saute the onions and garlic with the olive oil in a heavy pot until the onions become transparent. Add the duck meat and cook until it loses its raw color. Put all the herbs into a bag made from cheesecloth and put it into the pot with the tomatoes and their juice. Bring to a boil and simmer slowly for about 2 hours, skimming the fat from the surface from time to time. At the end there should be about 3 cups of rich-tasting ragu. Adjust the seasoning and set aside.

For the bechamel:

2 cups milk

4 tablespoons butter

3 tablespoons all purpose flour

1/4 teaspoon salt

1/8 teaspoon white pepper

some freshly grated nutmeg

In a small saucepan bring the milk to a boil. Meanwhile melt the butter over low heat in another saucepan. When the butter melts add the flour and let it bubble for 2 or 3 minutes, stirring constantly. Off the heat, add the hot milk all at once, stirring with a whisk. Return to the heat and simmer for 15 minutes until the sauce has reached the consistency of heavy cream. Strain into a bowl and set aside to cool.

For the pasta:

1 cup all purpose flour

1/2 cup semolina flour
3 whole eggs

Mix the all purpose and semolina flour together in a bowl. Make a well in the center of the flour, break in the eggs and begin mixing the eggs and flour together. When the dough comes together in a mass, knead it until the texture is smooth and silky. Roll the dough with a pasta machine in progressively thinner settings until the thinnest setting is reached. Cut the pasta strips the same length as the lasagne pan you will use. Cook the pasta in plenty of boiling salted water until tender then refresh in cold water. Dry the pasta strips between two towels and set aside.

To assemble the lasagne:
1 cup freshly grated parmesan cheese

Preheat the oven to 450 degrees.

Spread a thin layer of ragu on the bottom of the lasagne pan. Place a layer of pasta over it. Spread some ragu over the pasta, then spread bechamel over the ragu. Sprinkle some parmesan cheese over the bechamel. Place another layer of pasta on top and then some ragu, bechamel and cheese. Repeat the process until you have built 6 to 8 layers of pasta and come no closer than 1/2 inch to the top of the pan. Spread bechamel on the top layer, sprinkle with parmesan and dot with butter. Bake in the preheated oven for 20 to 30 minutes until a golden crust forms on top. Serve directly from the pan.

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[These recipes appeared in the Compost NewsLetter during 1990-92, while Ron was the executive chef of the Ristorante Donatello in San Francisco. All Magickal interpretations and comments are by Valerie Walker.]

Tagliolini with Prawns, Scallops, and Mussels in a Light Lemon Sauce

12 oz. fresh tagliolini

12 medium prawns, peeled and deveined

6 large sea scallops, the mussel attachment removed and cut into two pieces

12 fresh mussels, washed and the beard removed

2 lemons

1 cup dry white wine

2 cups fish broth or canned clam juice

5 tablespoons unsalted butter

1 tablespoon flour

1 tomato, peeled, seeded and diced

1 tablespoon chopped fresh thyme or lemon thyme

(Note: This recipe is for appetizer size portions. For main course, double the recipe. Good quality fresh pasta can be bought in most supermarkets or specialty food shops.)

To make the sauce:

With a vegetable peeler peel the zest of one lemon. Put into a two quart sauce pan with the juice of both lemons and the white wine. Bring to a boil and reduce by half. Add the fish broth or clam juice and bring to a boil. To make a beurre manie soften one tablespoon of butter in a small bowl and knead in the flour until a smooth paste is formed. Whip the paste to the boiling sauce a little at a time. The sauce should not appear to be thickened. The beurre manie is there to "capture" the butter we will add when the dish is finished. Simmer the sauce an additional ten minutes, strain and reserve until ready to serve.

To assemble the dish:

In a large covered skillet, bring the sauce to a boil with the diced tomato, chopped thyme and the mussels. Cook for one minute or until the mussels have opened. Add the prawns and scallops. Cook for two minutes, turn the prawns and scallops over and cook an additional two minutes. Do not overcook or the shellfish will become dry and tough.

Cook the pasta in a large quantity of lightly salted boiling water. The pasta will take from 1 to 5 minutes to cook, depending on how fresh it is.

When the pasta is cooked, drain it and add it to the skillet with the shellfish. Mix briefly, then divide the pasta among four warm plates. Arrange the shellfish around the pasta. Pour the sauce over the pasta. Garnish with a sprig of parsley and serve.

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Civet de Biche

Venison Stew (in honor of the Horned One)

To make the stock:

10 pounds venison bones

2 medium onions

3-4 carrots

6 stalks celery

2 heads garlic

1/4 cup tomato paste

6 bay leaves

20 black peppercorns

1/4 cup dry thyme

Brown the venison bones in a 350 degree oven for about 1 1/2 hours, stirring every 15 or 20 minutes. Roughly chop the onions, carrots, celery and garlic. Roast with the bones for the last 1/2 hour or 45 minutes. Put the bones, vegetables and tomato paste into a large stock pot and cover generously with water. Bring to a boil. Adjust the heat so that the stock simmers gently. Skim well then add the herbs. Simmer gently for 8 to 10

hours, skimming the surface from time to time. Strain the stock, discarding the bones.

To marinate the meat:

5 pounds venison meat

1 large onion

2 or 3 carrots

3 stalks of celery

1 head garlic, peeled

1 bunch fresh thyme

1 bunch fresh marjoram

3 or 4 sprigs fresh rosemary

6 bay leaves

12 black peppercorns

15 to 20 juniper berries

1 750-ml bottle full-bodied red wine

Use the shoulder, neck or leg for the stew. Cut the meat into 1 inch cubes trimming away any large pieces of fat or gristle. Peel and cut the vegetables into large dice. Mix all the dry ingredients in a large bowl. Pour in the red wine. Be sure there is enough wine to generously cover all the ingredients. Cover and store in the refrigerator for 24 hours. Stir the meat and vegetables 2 or 3 times during the marinating period.

To cook the stew:

Preheat oven to 325 degree. Remove the meat from the marinade. Drain well and pat dry with paper towels. Season the meat with salt and black pepper. Dust with 1 or 2 cups of flour, be sure to completely coat the meat with the flour. Heat a large, heavy pot on medium high heat. Brown the meat in small batches on all sides. When all the meat is browned, pour in the marinade with vegetables. While the marinade is coming to a boil, scrape the browned meat particles from the bottom of the pot. When the marinade comes to a boil there will be a large quantity of foam on the surface. Skim the foam and boil the marinade on high heat until reduced by two-thirds. Put the meat back in the pot and add enough stock to cover the meat and vegetables. Stir in 2 tablespoons tomato paste. Bring the stew to a simmer. Cover and cook in the preheated oven for about 1 1/2 to 2 hours. Skim the fat from the surface and stir the stew about once every half hour. The meat should be very tender but not falling apart when the stew is done. For a civet of this type, the meat is removed from the sauce, the vegetables discarded, then the meat and sauce recombined to warm for service. A fresh vegetable garnish is cooked separately.

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Sauce Grand Venuere

Sweet and Sour Sauce

(Note: Use this game sauce for grilled chops or loin roast.)

1/2 pound venison scraps, cut into 1 inch pieces, fat removed

1/4 cup peanut oil

4 shallots, chopped
1 small onion, chopped
1 carrot, chopped
1 head garlic, peeled
2 or 3 bay leaves
4 sprigs fresh thyme
12 black peppercorns
12 juniper berries
1/2 cup raspberry or red wine vinegar
1 cup brandy
2 cups red wine
1 quart venison stock
3 tablespoons cornstarch
1/2 cup heavy cream
3 to 4 tablespoons red currant jelly

Brown the venison scraps in a heavy 2 quart sauce pan over high heat. When the meat is well browned, turn the heat down to medium, add the shallots, onion, carrots and garlic. Continue to stir until the vegetables have turned golden brown. Add the herbs, vinegar, brandy and red wine. Turn the heat up to high and boil until the liquid has reduced by half. Add the venison stock. Bring to a boil, skim and let the sauce simmer gently for 1 to 1 1/2 hours, skimming often. The sauce will have reduced by 1/4 to 1/3 and the flavor become rather intense. Dilute the cornstarch in a few tablespoons of water and stir just enough into the sauce to thicken it lightly. Add the cream and enough red currant jelly to balance the acidity of the vinegar. Cook the sauce another 10 minutes. Season to taste. Strain and keep warm until ready to serve.

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Selvagina Sauce

1/2 pound venison shoulder or stew meat cut into 1" cubes

3 tablespoons peanut oil

1 medium onion, diced

1 carrot, diced

1 rib celery, diced

1 tablespoon tomato paste

12 juniper berries

12 whole black peppercorns

3 bay leaves

1 cup red wine
1/2 cup brandy
1 quart water
1/4 cup heavy cream
2 tablespoons unsalted butter
1/4 cup freshly grated parmesan cheese

Heat a heavy 4 quart saucepan over high heat. When it is quite hot, add the oil to the pot and brown the venison meat.

When it is nice and brown and a glaze has formed on the bottom of the pan, turn the flame down to medium and add the diced vegetables. Stirring often, cook the vegetables until they turn golden brown.

Add the tomato paste and the herbs and stir them into the contents of the pot for 1 minute. Deglaze with the red wine and brandy and set the liquid to reduce over medium heat until it is reduced by one half.

Add the water. Tie the juniper berries, peppercorns and bay leaves in a bag made of cheesecloth and add them to the pot. When the pot has come to a boil, skim the sauce well and set it to simmer over very low heat for 3 to 4 hours. Add a little water occasionally to maintain the level of liquid above the solids in the pot and skim from time to time.

After the sauce has gently cooked for 3 or 4 hours the meat will be easily shredded. Strain the sauce into a bowl or other container large enough to hold both the liquid and the meat. Discard the herb bag. Chop the meat, either by hand or in small batches in a food processor until it is shredded very fine and add it to the liquid in the bowl, mixing well. The sauce should not be soupy at this point, the meat and liquid forming a homogenous mass.

To finish the sauce, heat it over medium flame with the cream until it is hot. Add the butter and parmesan cheese and mix well just until they have been incorporated into the sauce. Adjust the seasoning and serve with a large robust pasta such as papardelli, fusilli, penne or in a lasagna.

Serves 6 as a main course, 12 as an appetizer.

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Cumberland Sauce

1 cup fresh or frozen lingonberries, cranberries or red currants

1/2 cup sugar

or

1/2 cup preserve of any tart, full flavored berry

1/4 cup brandy

1/4 cup port

the juice of one orange

the juice of one lemon
the zest of one orange cut into julienne and scalded for two minutes
the zest of one lemon cut into julienne and scalded for two minutes
two teaspoons dry mustard
pinch of cayenne pepper

Put all of the above ingredients into a saucepan and bring gently to a boil. Cook for ten to fifteen minutes or until the berries have plumped and burst and the sauce has become thick and gelatinous. If the sauce is too tart add a little sugar but be careful, this sauce should not be sweet.

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tales of the Greek Gods by Leah Samul

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It's All Geek to Me:
tales of the Greek Gods by Leah Samul
Samhain 1988: Hecate, the Underworld, and Projection

Even when there was evidence of matriarchal religion that had survived into the heavily patriarchal Greek theology, it seemed that scholars either ignored it or found a way to down-play it. One of the most salient examples of this is Hecate.

Although Hecate is one of my long-time favorites, I didn't expect to find very much on her in the literature. Imagine my surprise when I when I began to read Hesiod, one of the most ancient and well respected sources on the Greek deities. Hesiod lived roughly around 800 B.C. and, along with Homer, was accepted by the Greeks themselves as an authority on the gods. Hesiod spends more uninterrupted lines on Hecate than on any other deity. I will quote here directly from Norman O. Brown's very readable translation of Hesiod's Theogonies, which is probably the only readable thing Norman O. Brown has ever done:

"Asteria conceived and gave birth to Hecate, whom Zeus the son of Cronus exalted above all with honors. He gave her fine gifts: he assigned to her rights both in the earth and in the barren sea, and the immortal gods honor her greatly. To this day men on earth call on Hecate whenever they wish to make propitiation with the rich sacrificial offerings which the law commands. The man whose prayer is favorable received by the goddess acquires great honor and wealth with ease.

"Such is the power of Hecate; she has a share in the rights and privileges of every of one of the gods born of Earth and Sky. Nor did the son of Cronus forcibly deprive her of the properties she had received at the hands of the earlier generations of gods, the Titans; she still retains rights on earth and in the sky and on the sea, as assigned in the beginning by the first division of powers.

"Nor is her rank diminished because she is the only child of her mother; rather it is increased because Zeus honors her. She greatly aids and blesses her favorites; she sits beside kings in the judgment seat to give them majesty, and in the assembly of the people her favorite is conspicuous. When men put on their armor and make themselves ready for war, which destroys so many, Hecate with her generous aid enables her favorites to win victory and obtain glory. The goddess can if she wishes help and bless a contestant in the games: his strength and vigor win an easy victory and he happily carries home a fine prize and brings honor on his parents. And when men who work on the dark and treacherous sea pray to Hecate and to Poseidon, the god whose mighty blows make the earth quake, the great goddess can easily give them a plentiful catch; or, if she wishes, she can easily take it away from before their eyes.

"Along with Hermes she has power to make the animals on the farm multiply; if she wishes she can make cattle herds and flocks of mountain goats and woolly sheep greatly increase or greatly diminish. Thus Hecate, though the only child of her mother, is endowed with every privilege which the gods possess."

Well. One would be hard put to match that. Hecate was the only daughter of Asteria and Perses, and as such was a grandchild of the Titans who fought against Zeus. So it was unusual that she was so honored when Zeus went out of his way to degrade many of

the other Titans and their relations. And you'll notice that, contrary to later writers who make her dark and malicious, Hesiod sees no inherent evil in her. What he does see, obviously, is power.

Although Hesiod does not make her an underworld deity, Hecate was eventually associated with the underworld. I'm not exactly sure why this happens. Perhaps, since she was so powerful, the later myths put her in the Underworld to get her out of the way. The light of Apollo didn't penetrate there, and to the Greeks it remained a region of "shadows and mysteries." It is interesting that Larousse says that Hecate's name "seems to be the feminine form of a title of Apollo's; 'the far-darter...Hecate's lunar character always remained: she and Helios together witnessed the abduction of Kore by Hades." But whereas the Underworld god Hades was more respected than feared by mortals, Hecate took on the negative aspect that made her the counterpart of Kali, the Terrible Mother.

Why did only Hecate become frightful and devouring? The immediate answer is that Greek religion, which was of course male-dominated, needed to denigrate the power of Hecate by making her malicious. But a more complete answer is that Greek religion, unfortunately, had trouble accepting something it didn't understand. It could tolerate the ecstatic prophecies of the Oracles because they were under the control of Apollo, the god of light. The Underworld, on the other hand, was a place that in some ways was quite contrary to the emerging Greek consciousness. It was an unknown quantity, and mortals lost all control when they went there after death. The fear of a powerful woman added to the fear of a mysterious place and a loss of control combined to project fear and loathing onto Hecate.

Does this sound familiar? It took almost 2,000 years before Jung talked about the Shadow, and our (sadly human) inability to look at the fearful or hateful parts of ourselves. We have only to read the daily news to see that projection is one of major diseases of our time. I know I sometimes sound like a doomsayer in this column, but as a planet we'd better conquer this need we have to destroy what we fear, hate or can't understand. And who better to help us look at these things in ourselves than Hecate, the powerhouse of the Underworld? Recall that she comes to the aid of those who put on their armor to make ready for war. The enemy that we all need to face is inside of us, not somewhere "out there." I suppose we've all heard this before, but now as we go into the dark time (both seasonally and electorally) it's a good idea to think about these things again.

Well, what are you waiting for? Put on your armor...Hecate will meet you in the Underworld.

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It's All Geek to Me:

tales of the Greek Gods by Leah Samul

Eostre 1989: Athena and Salman Rushdie vs. Ares, skinheads and Shiites

Now be honest: six months ago, how many of you had even heard of Salman Rushdie, much less read his novels? Today it would be hard to find a single person who hasn't heard of him and the controversy surrounding his latest book, *The Satanic Verses*.

Protests all over the world are shown on the news nightly, and recently two bookstores in Berkeley that carried the book were bombed. And the radio station KPFA received a bomb threat for airing a panel discussion that examined the book from various different perspectives. As if that weren't enough to make you feel like you weren't living in the "land of the free and the home of the brave," a bunch of neo-Nazi hate mongers recently held a white power rock concert in Napa, California. If this kind of stuff is happening in the "dawning of the age of Aquarius" I can't imagine what's going to be happening at high noon, much less in the heat of the night. You may be asking yourself (as I was) what could possibly be motivating these insane jerk-offs? Well I'm happy to tell you that you have a Greek God to blame for at least some of this craziness.

Enter Ares. Son of Zeus and Hera and according to Homer, brother of Eris-- who herself is no stranger to conflict, Ares was the most unpopular Greek God in the entire pantheon. The Greeks themselves regarded him more with terror and extreme dislike than sympathy. Except for a few vase paintings he was rarely represented in image or sculpture.

He was not only the god of war, but of brutality, blind violence, bloody rage and carnage. And even in war, he lacked the cool-headed and intelligent capabilities of Athena, who knew the difference between simply fighting for its own sake and fighting to defend a good cause. These two fought on opposite sides in the Trojan War. And it should be noted that Ares was inclined to change sides. He didn't really care about loyalty as much as he wanted to kick ass; a sort of ancient mercenary soldier.

In the beginning of the *Iliad*, Hera saw Ares getting out of hand with his bloodthirsty

killing and she complained to Zeus, whose response was to send Athena down: "Go along, do; send Athena down to the hunt, she knows how to make him smart."
(Translation: Enough of Ares' antics. Let's get down! Send Athena to the battle and she'll put him in his place!)

Athena went down and saw Diomedes in trouble. He was a brave fighter but he was no fool. When he noticed that Ares was on the opposite side, he thought it better to retreat and regroup than to tackle this consummate master of the battlefield. Athena told Diomedes she'd be on his side and protect him. When Ares saw her he foamed at the mouth with hatred: "Why then, shameless fly, dost thine insatiable audacity enflame the war between the gods? What ardour carries thee away? I think that today thou shalt pay for all thou hast done to me!" (Translation: Athena, you worthless piece of garbage, how dare you come after me? I'm a God! I've been wanting to get you for years because you're always picking on me, and now I'll make you pay!)

Fortunately, he was no match for Athena's strength and abilities, and after she wounded him she said: "Vain fool! Hast thou not yet learned how superior my strength is to thine?" (Translation: You stupid jerk, don't you ever learn that violence for its own sake can never match my intelligent strength and wisdom?) At this point Ares howled with rage and went running to his father, Zeus: "Now look what she's done! Put up this bully Diomedes to run amuck against the Gods! I barely got away! That crazy girl, curse her, she always has some mischief in hand!" (Trans: Waaaaaaaaaah!!!! I got an owie and its all Athena's fault! I'm a God, and anyone who thinks they can blaspheme against us deserves to die! Kill kill kill kill kill!) But Zeus had no use for this kind of complaining: "Don't sit there whimpering, Ares; I won't have it. You know that I hate you more than any other god alive. All you ever care about is discord and battle and fighting....However, I will not let you suffer any longer, for you are my son after all. But if any lesser god had begotten this nonsense he would have been down below the heavenly host long ago." (Trans: Oh stop crying in your beer, you little twerp! Won't you ever learn that you can't bully people into submission with your rage and hate? I really think you're the biggest jerk around, and if I had anything to say about it I'd let you die. But this constitution that I wrote up protects all my Olympian kids, and you, unfortunately, are one of them. And you've got the constitutional right to come to me and get healed when you are wounded.)

So you're wondering where the Shiites and skinheads are getting their ideas and energy from...? Ares is definitely a perfect, ready-made role model for these people. Of course, the current situation is more complicated than that. I don't mean to be conveniently blaming everything on the local archetype. Humans don't come out of the womb hating everyone that's different from them. They've got to be taught to hate, as the song goes. Fundamentalists of all kinds are taught this by their own interpretation of their religious beliefs. And the skinheads are being fed this poison by their neo-Nazi leaders, who have their own interpretation as to why things aren't peachy-keen and smooth as silk for them. After all, they're white, aren't they? In their minds that makes them Gods.

I think there are some striking parallels between the actions of Ares and those of the

skinheads and fundamentalists. Like Ares, both these groups have whipped themselves up into a frenzy of hatred. And like Ares, they ruthlessly oppose anyone who opposes them. This is not true for other Greek Gods and Goddesses, who were sometimes won over by the spirit and tenacity of mortals they initially opposed. Ares tried to appeal to Zeus for protection, saying that these mortals shouldn't have the right to "run amuck against the immortal Gods." Fundamentalists, for their part, feel that because they have allied themselves with the one true God, no one has a right to represent a different theological view than theirs; to run amuck, as it were, over their religious viewpoint. They blame their opponents ("the great Satan", western ideology, secular humanism -- whatever) for all the problems in the world. Ares blamed Athena for the very conflict he was enjoying: "...dost thine insatiable audacity enflame the war between the Gods?" He wouldn't have said this if he was winning. But he wasn't, and there had to be someone else to blame.

For the skinheads, the problem is the Blacks, the Jews, the Asians and all the others who seem to have taken their jobs (or whatever they feel they are entitled to) away from them. And just as the skinheads wrap themselves up in the American flag and their constitutional rights to support their actions, so too Ares knew he could count on Zeus to heal him. If either of these groups had Athena's intelligence, they might look at things differently. The skinheads would see that the economy is making it very difficult for everyone to make ends meet. White males are no worse off than Blacks, women, or other minorities. Oppression does occur. No one would deny that people are out of work. But if anything is to blame for these tough times, it probably has more to do with our bloated military budget than programs like Head Start, which serve poor Whites as well as impoverished minorities. The fundamentalists would realize, as anyone with even two cents worth of brains can see, that Rushdie's novel is a work of fiction that can't possibly hurt a God who is supposed to be all-powerful, or his prophet.

As for the rest of us, we need the courage of Athena, who was always ready to fight for a cause that was just. We need to support bookstores that carry *The Satanic Verses*. And we need to write to our government officials and express our views on racism, anti-semitism, sexism, the need for more jobs, etc. We need to do this with the cool-headed intelligence of Athena, and the diplomatic skills of Themis, the Goddess of Justice. As Hesiod once said, "...For Justice, though often wounded, is always stronger in the end." Sources: *The Iliad* by Homer, translated by W. H. D Rouse. *The New Larousse Encyclopedia of Mythology*. *Gods and Heroes*, by Gustav Schwab. *Works and Days*, by Hesiod.

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It's All Geek to Me:

tales of the Greek Gods by Leah Samul

Lammas 1989: Hail Eris! Hail, Yes!

The name Eris is translated as Discord or Strife. Homer calls her the sister of Ares, who is the God of War. Hesiod saw her as the daughter of Nyx, the Greek word for night, and mother of a great number of horrible things that brought suffering to humans. Eris is best known for the episode which gave rise to the Trojan War.

Because she represented strife and discord, she was the only one of the Gods and Goddesses not to be invited to the marriage feast of Peleus and Thetis. She went anyway, but when she got there she was not allowed in the door. She had brought with her a golden apple that had the words "To the Fairest" written on it, and in an angry fit, she threw it into the crowd at the wedding reception. The three Goddesses who claimed the distinction of being "the fairest" were Aphrodite, Hera and Athena.

It was decided that an honest mortal on earth should judge this contest. Paris was chosen, and when he picked Aphrodite as the fairest, she gave him the most beautiful woman in the world as a reward. That was Helen of Troy, who was already married to Menelaus. When Paris claimed Helen and carried her away with him, he put into motion the actions that culminated in the Trojan War.

(Homer, THE ILIAD, Book IV; Hesiod, THEOGONY; Stapleton; p. 103)

[Editor's Note: The character of Eris has an interesting interpretation in the field of psychology. It is a common psychological observation that the practice of repressing difficult or troubling emotions will, if done severely or for a long enough time, backfire and cause problems -- worse problems than if they had been allowed to surface in conscious awareness in the first place. The parallel to Eris is obvious. Many people "don't invite" uncomfortable emotions into their own conscious awareness for the same reason Eris was not invited to the wedding party. If Eris had been invited to the wedding feast she probably wouldn't have caused the trouble that she did cause as a result of being shut out.

Along those same lines, repressed emotions will usually break loose and cause a much

bigger problem than if their existence had been acknowledged in the first place. Sigmund Freud and C. G. Jung were well aware of the rich repository of insight contained in the Greek myths. Especially in the case of Jung, the psychological theories that made up his world view reflect the value he placed on mythology as an invaluable part of the human experience.]

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It's All Geek to Me:

tales of the Greek Gods by Leah Samul

Mabon 1989: Persephone

Persephone: The daughter of Demeter and Zeus. Also known as Kore, which is the name under which she was worshiped at Eleusis during the rites that came to be known as the Eleusinian Mysteries . Persephone is a fascinating figure in Greek mythology, and the cult of Kore/Persephone was much evident in ancient Greece. Homer calls her "honored", "revered", and "proud", and refers to the underworld as "the groves of Persephone." Inscriptions on Greek tombstones refer to the underworld as the "chamber of Persephone" or the "house of Persephone." Hesiod speaks of her as "august" Persephone, and later says that she was forcibly taken by Hades from Demeter, with the knowledge and permission of Zeus.

The Homeric Hymn to Demeter gives a detailed account of her abduction. The story goes that she was picking flowers with her friends in a meadow. As she reached for a particularly beautiful flower, the earth opened up and out came Hades in his chariot. He dragged her, screaming, into the underworld. Only two people saw this abduction: Hecate and Helios.

Demeter sought her daughter for nine days and finally found out from Hecate, on the

tenth day, what had happened. After confirming the story with Helios, Demeter went into deep mourning for her lost daughter. It was only after Demeter removed her powers of fertility from the earth for a year that Zeus was forced to order Hermes to tell Hades that he had to let Persephone come back to her mother. Unfortunately, Hades tricked Persephone into eating a pomegranate seed before she left the underworld, and the pomegranate was symbolic of marriage. This meant that she was, effectively, married to Hades. She had to spend one third of the year in the underworld, but could spend the other two on the earth with her mother, Demeter. Thus was Persephone connected with the changing of the seasons and also with the idea of death and rebirth.

Persephone also figures in the myth of Adonis. According to Apollodorus, Adonis was entrusted as a young child to Persephone by Aphrodite. Aphrodite gave Persephone a chest with Adonis hidden in it. Because of his great beauty, Aphrodite did not want any of the Gods to see him. When Persephone looked in the trunk and saw the exquisitely lovely child, she refused to give him back to Aphrodite. Zeus solved this problem by having Adonis spend one third of the year with each Goddess, and then have one third of the year left for himself.

Although she was abducted and taken to the underworld against her wishes, it does not seem that she was seen as a powerless individual while she was down there. Ovid says that it was Persephone who changed the woman Mentha into the mint plant in the underworld. And Apollodorus says that in one of the versions of the story of Alcestis, it was Persephone who sent the loving Alcestis back up to the land of the living to rejoin her husband. In the Hymn to Demeter, when Hades tries to convince Persephone that the underworld isn't such a bad place, he tells her (among other things) that while she is in the underworld she will have the greatest homage among all the gods. And in the Odyssey she is said to have granted the seer Teiresias intelligence after even after death.

[Editor's Note: It would be wrong to assume that Persephone was seen by the ancient Greeks as a weak and helpless victim because of her abduction by Hades. Mikalson's quotations from the inscriptions on tombstones seem to indicate that the Greeks felt her power to be more accessible than that of the dreaded Hades; the fact that they addressed her at all shows that they definitely believed in her power in the underworld. In this sense, she calls to mind the medieval phenomenon of calling on the power of Mary instead of God the Father or even Jesus, who were powerful but feared.

According to classics scholar Sara Aleshire there was a widespread cult of Kore/Persephone in the ancient Greek world; there was certainly no cult of Hades. I am emphasizing Persephone's power because I have seen her represented by Jungian psychologists as a weak-willed and docile young girl. While Jungians, Freudians and anyone else certainly have the right to interpret the myths as they see fit, it is important to realize that there might be quite a difference between the way a modern-day psychologist interprets the myths and the way the ancients actually saw these mythological figures. In the case of Persephone, the difference is quite vast indeed! So, to paraphrase the Iliad, "Beware of Shrinks bearing myths."]

References: Hesiod, lines 768 and 912-14; Homer, Hymn to Demeter #1, Odyssey Book 10, lines 494-5, 509; Ovid, Metamorphoses, Book 10; Apollodorus, 1.9.15 & 3.14.4; Mikalson, 1983, pages 74-82)

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It's All Geek to Me:

tales of the Greek Gods by Leah Samul

Brigid 1989: Brigida, The Muses, and Apollo

Does the Celtic Goddess Brigida have anything to do with Apollo and the Muses? Yes, if you enjoy looking at similarities between widely divergent cultures. This is Brigida's month for those of us who celebrate the Celtic influenced tradition, and so this month's Greek column will talk about some of similarities in the attributes of these deities. Let me state at the start that I don't mean to suggest any kind of cross-cultural pollination occurred between these two groups. I'm not trying to prove that the ancient Celts hung around with the ancient Greeks and that this camaraderie produced a common way of seeing things. I'm only pointing out where resemblances occur.

Brigida is one of the more well-known and recognized Celtic deities, having survived into Christianity under the guise of St. Brigid. There is no St. Apollo, and classics scholars have always had trouble with his multi-faceted personality: "The difficulty is that the legend of Apollo and his functions reveal divergences which are sometimes even contradictory", and "As to his functions, they are so multiple and complex that it is often hard to connect one with another." (Larousse, p. 113) However, the reading I've done shows that, taken together, Apollo and the Muses have some attributes similar to Brigida's constellation of smithcraft, healing, and inspiration or poetry.

The poetry/inspiration aspect is the most obvious and easiest to see. The Muses were part of the retinue of Apollo and were his habitual companions. They were very important on Olympus, where their poetry and music often charmed all the Gods, especially Zeus. Hesiod begins his *Theogony* by praising the Muses, and in the same work credits them with being his inspiration in his description of the Gods and Goddesses. Their number varied, going from three at the start who were worshipped on Mount Helicon, to seven in Lesbos and Sicily, eight in primitive Athens, and finally nine. Their names were Clio, Euterpe, Thalia, Melpomene, Terpsichore, Erato, Polyhymnia, Urania and Calliope.

At first they were seen collectively as a group that presided over all aspects of music and poetry. This later became more defined and they acquired individual characteristics. And it appears from way Larousse talks about the Muses, drama was included under the heading of poetry. Calliope, who was first in rank of all the others, took the function of the Muse of Epic Poetry and Eloquence. Her symbols were the stylus and tablet. Erato was the Muse of Love Poetry. Thalia, who at first was a bucolic Muse, later became the Muse of Comedy. Her symbols were the shepherd's staff and the comic mask. And Melpomene was the Muse of Tragedy, with the symbols of the mask of Tragedy and, interestingly, the Club of Heracles. The Muses were acknowledged to be the source of inspiration to writers, dramatists and poets, and they were held in high esteem in the ancient classical world.

Another similarity to Brigida that is easy to see is the attribute of healing. Apollo is connected to health and healing in several ways. Larousse says that "because the sun is murderous with its rays which strike like darts, and at the same time beneficent because of its prophylactic powers, Apollo was thought of as an archer-God who shot his arrows from afar (Hecatebolos) as the God of sudden death; but also as a healer-God who drove away illness (Alexikakos)" (Larousse, p. 113)

In addition, one of Apollo's sons, Asclepius, became the God of medicine. Asclepius was educated by the centaur Chiron, who educated many young Greek heroes. According to some traditions Chiron was thought to be the source of knowledge about medical arts, which he passed on to Apollo's son.

The healing aspect of Apollo resembles Brigida in another way, and this is where things get a little more complicated. Brigida was connected to smithcraft. The Olympian God most associated with smithcraft would be Hephaestus, the blacksmith of Mt. Olympus. Although neither Apollo or the Muses were directly involved in smithcraft, Apollo was associated with the light of the sun, which of course carries heat with it. As stated above, the light and heat of the sun are important for healing. Connecting this to Brigida, it is the heat of fire that enables blacksmiths and smithcraft workers of all kinds to do their work.

In this regard, fire is the element of transformation. It takes no stretch of the imagination to notice that the healing process is one of transformation from disease to health. The ability of fire to strengthen and purify metals as a blacksmith does when he/she creates

a sword is mirrored in the modern-day use of the phrase "baptism of fire." Apollo's son Asclepius was in fact born in the midst of fire. He was torn from his mother's womb when her dead body was burning on her funeral pyre.

These are a few of the similarities I've noticed between the Greek group of Apollo and the Muses, and the Celtic Brigida. I don't mean to try to convince anyone that there is an exact parallel going on here. But the cross cultural resemblances that come up naturally are always fascinating, and for me it is one of the most enjoyable aspects of reading and studying mythology.

PRAYERS TO BRIGID AND PAGANISM IN CELTIC CHRISTIANITY

[Brigid is one of my patroness Goddesses and I'm always on the look-out for prayers I can adapt and say to her at odd times: like when I'm riding on the bus, washing dishes, at the laundromat, etc. I recently came across two books that have Celtic Prayers/Invocations in them. Some of the prayers in these books do mention Brigid specifically, but most of them were addressed to other Christian deities and/or Saints. It goes without saying that wherever I have substituted the name Brigid, you can substitute your own favorite God/dess.

The two books I'm using as sources are Celtic Prayers: selected by Avery Brooke from the Collection of Alexander Carmichael, (designated as CP), and Celtic Christianity: Ecology and Holiness, An Anthology by C. Bamford and WP Marsh (designated as CC).

Both of these books stressed the fact that Celtic Christianity was much more connected to nature than the Christianity that developed in the rest of Europe. There's no doubt in my mind that this connection to nature came from the influence of Paganism and the Druids. While much (but not all) of the Pagan influence in Christianity disappeared during the Witch purges of Western Europe, it is a fact that the Inquisition never reached Ireland or the other Celtic countries in that area. For this reason Ireland, Scotland, Wales, and the Isle of Man might have been saved from the Inquisition inspired anti-Pagan hysteria that started in the Middle Ages and lasted into the "Enlightenment." I used the prayers in these two books as jumping off points and changed the words to fit God/dess spirituality. For instance, where these books refer to the Holy Trinity, I substituted the Triple Goddess. I encourage people to further adapt these prayers and invocations and use them in rituals. -- Leah]

The Deer's Cry
(From CC)

I arise today through a mighty strength,
The invocation of the Triple Goddess:
Through belief in the threeness,
Through comfort in the oneness,
Of the creator of creation.

I arise today through the strength of the universe:

Light of sun, radiance of moon,
Splendor of fire, speed of lightning,
Swiftness of wind, depth of sea,
Stability of earth, firmness of rock.

I arise today through Brigid's strength to instruct me:
Brigid's might to uphold me,
Brigid's wisdom to guide me,
Brigid's eyes to look before me,
Brigid's ears to hear me,
Brigid's words to speak for me,
Brigid's hands to guard me,
Brigid's shield to protect me,

I summon all Brigid's power to stand between me and the evils of the world;
I summon all Brigid's power to show to me the evil within myself;
And I summon all Brigid's fire
to purge me of evil and illness
and to heal me anew.

Invocation
(From CC)

Brigid of the Dawn
Brigid of the Clouds
Brigid of the Stars
Brigid of the Elements
Brigid of the Skies
Brigid of the Moon
Brigid of the Sun

[Original prayer said "Son of..."; as such, I think it is an excellent prayer to use when initiating a man or boy, or to be said by a man who is trying to connect with the divinity in himself.]

I Give Thanks
(From CP)

I give thanks to thee, O Brigid,
That I have risen today, to the rising of this life itself;
May it be to thine own glory,
and to the glory of my spirit likewise.

O great Brigid, aid my spirit with thy great healing powers.
Help me to avoid doing evil to myself and to others;
and as the mist scatters on the crest of the hills, may your fires clear each ill haze from

my heart.

Be the eye of Brigid between me and each eye
The purpose of Brigid between me and each purpose
The hand of Brigid between me and each hand
The desire of Brigid between me and each desire
And no one can curse me.

Be the love of Brigid between me and each love
The kindness of Brigid between me and each kindness
The will of Brigid between me and each will
The ecstasy of Brigid between me and each ecstasy
And no venom can wound me.

Brigid's Aid
(listed in both CC & CP)

Brigid to enfold me
Brigid to surround me
Brigid in my speaking
Brigid in my thinking

Brigid in my sleeping
Brigid in my waking
Brigid in my watching
Brigid in my hoping

Brigid in my life
Brigid on my lips
Brigid in my soul
Brigid in my heart

Brigid in my living
Brigid in my dying
Brigid in my rebirth
Brigid in my spirit forever.

Both books remark on the strong influence that nature has had on Celtic Christianity, and how different this is from the way Christianity developed in other countries. For example, a fragment of one of the prayers says: "She of my love is the new moon / The God of life illumining her." And then there's this one: "The eye of the great God, the eye of the God of Glory...Pouring upon us at each time and season. / Pouring upon us gently and generously. / Glory to thee, thou glorious sun / glory to thee thou sun, face of the God of life." And as Avery Brooke comments, while there were prayers asking for protection from "fairy women, banshees and nymphs...Many old druidic customs were happily blessed into the Christian faith..." (from CP.) The great respect in which the

Druids were held by the Celts comes through as clear as a bell in this partial quotation from the prayer "Song of Trust": "I adore not the voice of birds...nor lots in this world...My Druid is Christ, the son of God..." (From CC, emphasis his). And one could hardly get more Pagan than this prayer, quoted in entirety:

The Sea
(from CC)

Look you out
northeastwards
over the mighty ocean,
Teeming with sea-life;
home of the seals,
sporting, splendid,
its tide has reached
fullness.

When Joe and I visited Brittany (Celtic France), we made a point of going to Karnac, which has the largest concentration of standing stones and stone alignments of anywhere in Europe. The beauty and the psychic impact of these Neolithic monuments was breathtaking beyond words. So it was no surprise to read in Celtic Prayers that "Scottish Gaelic today still has a phrase which means 'Are you going to church?' but when translated literally says, 'Are you going to the stones?'" (from CP, emphasis is Brooke's)

MAY THE TRIPLE GODDESS BRIGID BRING YOU HER BLESSINGS!

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It's All Geek to Me:

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Samhain 1989: Hades

Son of Rhea and Cronus. Brother of Zeus and Poseidon. Hades was known as "the other Zeus" or "the subterranean Zeus." Hades had two other names. He was called Pluto by both the Greeks and the Romans. Tripp speculates that this was so because the Greeks didn't want to call out the name of this powerful deity, lest they attract him in some way. The name Pluto is taken from the word Ploutus, which means wealth or riches. This might sound incongruous, but Pluto was the God whose influence from under the earth helped the crops give forth richly of their fruits. There is some evidence that in this aspect he was a benevolent deity and was associated with the cult of Demeter. Burkert comments that "The Athenians called the dead Demetreioi and sowed corn on graves."

This is not to say that Hades was commonly associated with regeneration and growth; he was much more frequently connected with death. According to Burkert, to be carried away by Hades or to speak of celebrating marriage with him were common metaphors for death, especially in reference to young girls. Because of the fear in which mortals held the Hades/Pluto deity, he was usually worshiped under the name Pluto, since this was his less frightening aspect. When the Greeks did call on him as Hades, they prayed to him by striking the ground with a staff or with their bare hands.

Sacrifices to Hades usually consisted of a black animal: a black ewe or a black ram. His other name, used by Homer in the Hymn to Demeter, is Aidoneus, which means "the unseen one" or "the invisible." In addition to being invisible to mortals because he lived in the underworld, Hades possessed a helmet which could make him invisible when he travelled above ground.

Hades was both the name of the God of the underworld and the name given to the underworld itself. As a God he was the brother of Zeus and Poseidon. Generally, he does not seem to have been seen as a malicious or nasty deity. Both Gods and mortals respected him, although mortals generally tried to stay out of his way. But it must be stressed that Hades bore no similarity to the threatening evil-doer that Christians later called the devil. Nor did the ancients seem to fear Hades as one who would punish them in the afterlife for the crimes they had committed in life. There is only one occasion when Hades did something like that: when Pirithous and Theseus came to the underworld to ask Persephone to marry Pirithous. Hades offered them hospitality and tricked them into sitting in chairs of forgetfulness, to which they became attached and bound by coils of snakes. Heracles rescued Theseus from this predicament but couldn't help Pirithous because an earthquake occurred.

Hades interacted on a number of occasions with Gods and mortals other than Heracles. He is best known for the episode in which he abducts Persephone, the daughter of Demeter. The story goes that Persephone was gathering flowers in a field one day with her friends. As she reached out for a particularly lovely one, the earth opened up and Hades came roaring out in a chariot. He grabbed the girl and took her to the

underworld, which was his home. After looking for her for a long time, Demeter finally became distraught and withheld her fertile powers from the earth. This means that nothing bore fruit. Eventually Zeus had to tell Hades to let Persephone return to the earth. But Hades was clever. While she was in the underworld he gave Persephone a pomegranate to eat. This fruit was sacred to the underworld, and would therefore bind anyone who ate it to the underworld. Persephone only ate a portion of the fruit, and so she had to return to Hades for several months out of the year. Sources conflict on the time period. Some say four months and some say six.

Hades had a three headed watchdog named Cerberus who helped insure that no one would get away from the underworld. But in one case someone almost got out. When Eurydice died, her husband Orpheus descended to the underworld to try to persuade Hades to let her come back to earth with him. He succeeded, but Hades said she could only go back if Orpheus did not turn around to look at her as they left the underworld. For whatever reason, Orpheus looked, and Eurydice had to stay in the underworld.

Heracles came down to the underworld on his twelfth labor, which was to bring back Cerberus. Hades told Heracles that he could have the dog if he could subdue him without using his weapons. Heracles was able to do so and after he showed Cerberus to King Eurystheus, who had ordered the labors, he brought the dog back to Hades. Two sources, Larousse and Schwab, mention that Hades only agreed to let Heracles wrestle with the dog because he first wounded Hades in the shoulder with his arrow. Thus feeling the pains of a mortal body, Hades did not try to argue with Heracles. According to Apollodorus, Hades was wounded by Heracles again when he took the side of the Pylians against whom the hero was fighting.

A number of plants and trees are associated with the God Hades: the pomegranate, the herb mint, the narcissus and the cypress. Two of these, the narcissus and the pomegranate, were also sacred to Persephone. The mint was originally an underworld nymph named Minthe with whom Hades became infatuated. Persephone went after her and trampled her into the ground, and Hades then transformed Minthe into the mint plant. Additionally, black poplars and fruit-perishing willows were said to grow in the underworld, which Homer calls "the groves of Persephone."

(Apollodorus, 2.5.12, 2.7.3, 3.16.24; Homer, HYMN TO DEMETER, and also THE ODYSSEY, Book 10, lines 509-10; Larousse, p. 164; Schwab, p. 181; Burkert, p. 161 & 196)

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It's All Geek to Me:

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Yule 89: Helios

Sometimes spelled as Heli^us. His family connections are a matter of dispute. He is the son of Hyperion and Thea and the brother of Selene and Eos, according to Hesiod. The Homeric Hymn to the Sun lists Hyperion as his father and Euryphaessa as his mother. According to Hesiod, he is the father with Perseis of Circe and Aeetes. According to Apollodorus, his child by Perseis is Pasiphae. And Ovid says that with Clymene, Helios' children are Phaethon, Lampetia and Phaethusa. Tripp says that Lampetia and Phaethusa were his daughters by the nymph Neaera.

Sources conflict as to exactly how Helios was seen by the Greeks. Apollo was associated with the light of the sun. Whether Helios, separate from Apollo, was universally seen as the personification of the sun is not clear. Stapleton says that "there was a tendency, in historical times, to identify Helios with Apollo, but the sun, as a cult in the ancient world, did not receive wide acceptance until the late Roman empire when, as Sol Invictus, he became in many ways its principal God." Schwab says that Helios is one of the names of Apollo, but Larousse says that the sun itself "was represented by a special divinity, Helios." Burkert feels that Apollo and Helios were consciously equated. In the English translation of Hesiod's Theogony, Helios is called "the great Sun-God." To make matters even more confusing, his father Hyperion was also considered a sun God.

According to Pindar, Helios was not present when the world was divided up. When he returned, Zeus offered to cast lots again, but Helios didn't think that was necessary and simply asked for the island of Rhodes. The statue called the Colossus of Rhodes was actually a statue of him, and it stood in the harbor. The island was sacred to Helios and he became its patron. He mated with Rhodes (it is unclear whether this is a nymph or the island itself) and had seven sons who were endowed "with the shrewdest wits of the men of old time."

As the sun, Helios saw everything that happened on the earth. In the Homeric Hymn he is described as riding the chariot drawn by stallions across the sky and into the ocean. He therefore saw the abduction of Persephone by Hades (as did Hecate), and when

Demeter came to ask him if he had seen her daughter he told her what had happened. He also witnessed and then reported to Hephaestus the love affair that his wife Aphrodite was having with Ares. Helios fell in love with Leucothoe, disguising himself as her mother so that he could get into her bedroom. This scandalous love affair was reported to Leucothoe's father King Orchamus by a nymph named Clytie, who was a former sweetheart of Helios and was jealous. The king punished his daughter by burying her alive, and Helios was unable to revive her. He then anointed her body and turned her into the tree that yields frankincense, which was a much-valued incense during ancient times. Clytie eventually was transformed into the plant called heliotrope, because its stem, leaves and flower turn toward the light of the sun and follow its motion across the sky during the day.

Helios figures in the myths of two of Greece's most famous heroes: Odysseus and Heracles. Odysseus had been told by both Circe and Tiresias to avoid the island of the Sun god, who is referred to in the *Odyssey* as both Hyperion and Helios. But Odysseus' men talked him into landing there. They were becalmed there because the wind was blowing from the wrong direction, and one day while Odysseus had left them and fallen asleep, they went back on their sworn word and killed some of the cattle that belonged to Helios. Discovering this, his daughter Lampetia told her father about it. Helios threatened to shine in Hades and bring back the dead, and so Zeus was obliged to punish the offenders by causing them to be shipwrecked in a storm. The only one to survive was Odysseus.

Heracles had an encounter with Helios while working on his tenth labor, which was to seize the cattle of Geryon. On his way there he got tired of the heat of the sun and, taking out his bow, he aimed it at the sun. Helios admired his daring and rewarded him by giving him a golden cup as a boat.

[Editor's Note: Many of you who read information about the Greek Gods and Goddesses might notice that the ancient sources seem to be in conflict with each other, and wonder why the ancient writers couldn't have kept things straight when it came to their own religion. You then might be tempted to feel, as I did for a long time, that the Greeks were very confused about their Gods, Goddesses and mythological figures. Recall, when you are tempted to become impatient about all this conflicting information, that there is no such thing as a simple religious tradition; all religious tradition is as complex as the human experience that gives it form. And we humans are nothing if not multi-faceted and complex! If you asked a Catholic and a Lutheran to talk about their respective religions, you would get a very different view of Christianity. For one thing, the Lutheran wouldn't give any credence to the huge number of saints that the Catholic prays to: the Catholic thinks saints are specially consecrated and holy spirits, and the Lutheran thinks saints are a lot of bunk. An ancient Greek transported to this century and faced with all the different sects of Christianity, or even Judaism or Buddhism, might think that we're the ones who are confused about our divinities!]

(Sources: Hesiod lines 371-2 and 956-7; Apollodorus, 3.1.2; Pindar, *Olympia* 7, lines 55-76; Hymn #1 to Demeter; *Odyssey* Book 8, lines 267-71; Ovid, *Metamorphoses*,

Book 4, lines 204-271; Schwab, p.747; Stapleton p.124; Burkert, p. 120 and 336; Larousse, p. 113)

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It's All Geek to Me:

tales of the Greek Gods by Leah Samul

Eostre 90: Philemon and Baucis, or "The Story of a Happy Marriage"

The story of Philemon and Baucis is one of the most tender and lovely stories in Greek mythology. The story goes that Zeus and Hermes were walking on earth disguised as mortals. They went to various houses in Phrygia and were rudely turned away without any kindness or hospitality.

On the outskirts of one town that had been especially rude to them, they encountered an old couple living in a very poor hut. These two were Philemon and Baucis, who had been married for many years and were still happily in love with one another. They served the two disguised Gods very generously. Even though they had not much themselves, they gave the very best of what they had. Then they noticed that the wine carafe kept refilling itself, no matter how much wine they drank. They suspected the truth: that their visitors were divine.

The Gods revealed themselves and then took the couple to the top of a hill. When they turned to look at the town they used to live near, they saw that it had been turned into a lake as punishment for its cruel lack of hospitality. The poor hut of Philemon and Baucis, on the other hand, had been turned into a temple. Zeus told them he would grant them any wish. They said that they wished to be caretakers of the temple and serve the Gods all their days. And they asked that neither one outlive the other, for they could not bear to live without the love they each had felt for all these years.

Zeus granted their wish. They lived together in the temple for many more happy years. At the moment they died, they looked down and saw that they turned into trees, an Oak and a Linden, that grew side by side. (Tripp, p. 132)

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It's All Geek to Me:

tales of the Greek Gods by Leah Samul

Penelope, or "Stand By Your Man, Greek Style"

Loretta Lynn had nothing on this ancient Greek wife who waited somewhere between 13 and 20 years (the texts are confusing on the exact time) for her husband to return to her.

While Odysseus was occupied with the Trojan War and subsequently with the adventures that would comprise Homer's epic poem, the *Odyssey*, Penelope and their young son Telemachus waited patiently at home in Ithaca. When Odysseus didn't return from the war, suitors swarmed to her household to vie for her attention.

Unfortunately, although all the suitors arrogantly thought themselves to be the equal of Odysseus, Penelope and Telemachus thought they were weak imitations at best. Because of the Greek concept of hospitality, Penelope had to entertain them, which also meant feeding them and letting them stay at the manor. They demanded that she choose one of them to marry, since no one in Greece expected that Odysseus had survived the Trojan War.

By this time Telemachus was almost an adult, and he knew enough to realize that his mother was in a tough spot. He went off to discover whether anyone had seen his Dad

since the end of the war. In the meantime, Penelope used her wiles to hold off the lusting and greedy suitors. One ploy she used was to tell them that she would choose one of them as soon as she finished weaving the funeral shroud she was working on. Each day she wove a little more, and each night she took apart what she had woven during the day.

Eventually, the suitors got wise. Just when she was about to be forced to chose one to marry, Odysseus came back and killed all of them for their arrogance and for the rude way they acted towards Penelope. (That'll teach'em!)

Penelope is often seen as the model of the faithful wife, held up to all married women as the example they should follow. Personally, I don't think it had anything to do with faithfulness. I think that Penelope had been so happily married to Odysseus that she simply didn't want anyone else. She and Odysseus were so well matched that no one else would do. It wasn't blind loyalty that made her wait so long; it was (sigh) True Love. Even in Greek mythology, it did happen. And when Penelope was finally reunited with Odysseus, they stayed up all night long, talking and getting acquainted all over again, and their happy relationship resumed as if nothing had ever come between them. (Homer, Odyssey)

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It's All Geek to Me:

tales of the Greek Gods by Leah Samul

Mabon 1990: Gaia, Mother Earth

Also written as the word Ge. Without a mate, the mother of Uranus, Pontus and Ourea. Gaia was the word that the Greeks used to personify the earth itself, which to them was female. According to Hesiod she was the very first divinity to appear out of Chaos (the

void, nothingness) and her name means "the deep breasted earth."

Gaia's first offspring were Uranus (the sky), Ourea (the mountains) and Pontus (the sea). Then she mated with Uranus and by him had various children: the Titans, the Cyclopes and the Centimanes, who were also known as the Hecatoncheires.

Possibly because he feared their strength, Uranus hated the Cyclopes and the Hecatoncheires and as they were born he got rid of them by hiding them in Gaia's body, or in other words, by burying them in the earth. Gaia felt this and was filled with anguish. She decided to approach her children and see if they would help her put an end to this. Cronos, called by Hesiod "the cunning trickster", agreed to help.

Gaia gave him a sharp sickle with a jagged edge, and hid him in ambush. When Uranus came to make love with Gaia that night, Cronos castrated his father with the sickle. Some of the blood from this deed fell onto Gaia and she gave birth to the Erinnyes, the Giants, and according to one version of the story, the Meliae, or ash tree nymphs. The castrated organs of Uranus themselves floated on the waves of the sea until white foam came from the cut-off flesh, and Aphrodite, whose name was given to her because she grew up from the froth of the sea, was born.

Unfortunately, Cronos grew to become much like his father Uranus. When Rhea began to give birth to the Gods and Goddesses, Cronos swallowed all of the children so that they wouldn't try to claim kingship. But Rhea called on Gaia and Uranus to help her, which they did. Gaia herself nursed the young Zeus, and fooled Cronos by giving him a stone wrapped in a baby blanket to swallow. He thought it was his child, and swallowed the stone. Gaia took the child to a safe place and nursed him.

When Zeus grew to manhood he overthrew Cronos, banishing him to the depths of the universe. Gaia was often willing to help Zeus. She warned him that if he had a son by his wife Metis, he would be deposed by this child. For that reason, he swallowed Metis when she was pregnant with Athena, hoping to prevent any further problems. After the battle that went on between the Titans and the Olympian deities, which was won by the Olympians, Gaia urged the rest of the Olympians to invite Zeus to be their ruler. In Hesiod, Gaia and Zeus don't really ever fight against each other. The only time they might possibly be construed to be at odds is when Gaia gives birth by Tartarus to Typhoeus, who was strong enough to be a serious threat to Zeus' authority. Zeus overcomes Typhoeus, but there doesn't seem to be any ill will between Gaia and Zeus.

In Apollodorus, things are a little different. At one point Gaia and Zeus fight on opposite sides because the Giants, who were her children, stormed Olympus. Gaia searched for a drug to make the Giants invulnerable, but Zeus found the drug before she could, and the Olympians were again victorious.

Even after the Olympian Gods and Goddesses took over, the Greeks still revered Gaia. Larousse says that the Gods and Goddesses swore on her name when they took oaths. Larousse says that the power of oracles originally belonged to Gaia, and that

Apollo's oracle at Delphi was at first Gaia's. The Homeric Hymn to the Earth waxes eloquent in its praise of "the mother of us all, the oldest of all...", and it constantly reminds the reader that whoever you are, it is the earth herself who nourishes you. Regarding specific religious ritual, Burkert, admitting to speculation on this information, indicates that the "worship of the earth, Gaia, Ge, is often considered as a prototype of all piety...evoking the political as well as the agrarian aspect -- the earth not only sustains but also imposes obligations on her native sons. In customary religion, the role of Gaia is exceedingly modest; it develops from the practice of pouring libations, most notably the ceremonial carrying of water to a cleft in the ground. Neither Demeter nor the Great Goddess of Asia Minor is to be identified with Earth."

(Tripp, p. 249-50 [Hesiod, THEOGONY 116-187, 233-239, 459-497, 820-822, 881-885; Apollod 1.1.1-5, 1.2.1, 1.2.6, 1.3.6, 1.5.2, 1.6.1-3, 2.1.2, 2.5.11, 3.8.1; Homer, ODYSSEY 11.576; Homer HOMERIC HYMN TO THE EARTH; Pindar, PYTHIAN ODES 9.59-65; Hyginus FAB 203; Pausanias 1.2.6, 1.14.3, 5.14.10, 7.25.13, 8.25.8-10, 10.5.6, 10.6.6] Burkert, p. 175)

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It's All Geek to Me:

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Samhain 1990: Tales From The Dark Side

The Gorgons

According to Hesiod, the three daughters of Ceto and Phorcys. The most famous of these three was Medusa, who, along with her sisters Stheno and Euryale, could turn humans to stone by looking at them. If you go by Hesiod's account and consider these three to be the daughters of Ceto and Phorcys, the Gorgons were the sisters of the Graeae, Echidna and the dragon Ladon. Other sources say that the Gorgons were the

offspring of Gaia, or Ge. According to this genealogy, Gaia brought forth the Gorgons to help her children the Giants in their war against the Olympian Gods. Of the three Gorgons, only Medusa was mortal. (Tripp, p. 252 [Hesiod, THEOG 270-283; Euripides, ION])

The Graeae

Their name means "grey women," and there were usually two of them. Their names were Enyo, Pemphredo, sometimes spelled as Pephredo, and Dino, variously spelled Deino. They were the daughters of Ceto and Phorcys and the sisters of the Gorgons, Echidna and Ladon. Old hags who had been grey-haired from their birth, they seem to personify age the way the Graces personified beauty and grace. They shared among them only one eye and one tooth. When Perseus was trying to defeat their sisters the Gorgons, he went to their cave and snatched the tooth and the eye and told them he would return it if they told him the whereabouts of certain nymphs, because they had weapons that he could use to defeat the Gorgons. According to Apollodorus, upon telling him this they got their tooth and eye back. (Tripp, p. 254 [Apollodorus, 2.4.2, Hesiod, THEOG 270-283; Aeschylus, PROM BOUND 794-795])

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It's All Geek to Me:

tales of the Greek Gods by Leah Samul

Brigid 91: Our Hero: a love story

The most complete version of the story of Hero survives in the poem of Musaeus, of about the fourth century. Hero was a priestess who served Aphrodite of Sestos, and Leander was from Abydos. The two met at a festival of Adonis and fell in love. She promised to light a torch to guide him, and he was willing to swim across the ocean each night to be with her. This went on for many summer nights, and when he arrived at

her shore, Hero would anoint him with sweet oils to take away the sea salt harshness on his skin. They made love for many nights. When winter came, the seas were storm tossed. One night there was a storm that extinguished the light of the torch, and Leander drowned. When Hero found his body dead on the rocks, she jumped into the water from the cliffs and drowned herself to be with him. (Stapleton, p. 142, Grant, p. 373-78)

[Note: Grant has a nice writeup on this and mentions that this story is found among folk tales all over Europe. In the Classical literature it appeared in Virgil and Ovid]

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It's All Geek to Me:

tales of the Greek Gods by Leah Samul

Litha 91: Honky Woman

ŠLeah Samul, Sub-Urban Shaman, 1991

[It seems that everywhere we look, people are getting into Native American stuff. North American, South American, Central American, it really doesn't matter as long as you can make yourself feel like you're something other than your own honky self. Now, it occurs to us here at CNL that we ought to jump on the bandwagon and make some money on this trend before it runs itself out. And so, for the mere price of our newsletter, you get this ancient Native American prayer that has been adapted to modern day use. Unlike other groups, we're not going to tell you that a percentage of the profits from this rag will go towards water beds for the descendents of the Anasazi or some other noble cause for tribal people--we need all the money we can get to keep ahead of the collection agencies.]

(With sincere apologies to the late, great Maria Sabina; I hope her spirit has a sense of

humor.)

Honky Woman am I
woman of the suburbs am I
woman who eats big Macs am I
woman with a messy house am I
woman whose computer is crashing am I
woman whose children poop in their diapers am I

farting woman am I, belching woman am I, dialing for dollars woman am I
food processor woman am I, Oprah Winfrey woman am I

supermarket woman am I, says:
buy the cheap mayonnaise
buy the cheap Kleenex
buy the cheap chicken fryers at 69 cents a lb.
buy the cheap generic floor wash
buy a lottery ticket so we can all get rich and purchase more Pre-Columbian art works
that were ripped off from the Huichols or some other such primitive culture am I

culture that seems cool to middle class Honkys says:
We take your American Express-yourself card
we take your Master Race card
We take your USA Dollars, but please don't send us any more Shirley McLaines or Lynn
Andrews because they are such dingbats, says

Woman of holy water am I
the water from my Maytag, the holy tears that give life to my dirty clothes
the water from the laundromat, the holy tears that save my monthly drought allotment
the water from my garden hose drips holy H2O tears onto my lawn, which I paid a
landscaper \$5,000 to fix up, especially the back yard that has the St Francis of Assisi
Bird bath and the American flag

Whirling woman am I
Beating drum woman am I
Beating off woman am I
Dildo woman am I, says,
Buy that sex toy, all acts of love and pleasure are her rituals
Eat that chocolate cake, you can lose the calories tomorrow in aerobics class

Workout woman am I
Iron supplement woman am I
Anorexic who lives on vitamins and tofu woman, am I
Bulemic woman who worships daily at the porcelain commode shrine, am I

May the Holy Virgin of the Tortilla bless the dashboard of your BMW

May the Gods bless your CD's, your tape decks
May all the spirits bless your doctor who continually refills your tranquilizer
prescription, and may you find peace of mind, or at least stupefaction, in sleep)

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It's All Geek to Me:

tales of the Greek Gods by Leah Samul

Eostre 91: Leda

Leda was the daughter of King Thestius. She was desired by Zeus, who impregnated her by disguising himself as a swan. Shortly thereafter, her own husband Tyndareus made love to her. Some sources say that from this double coupling, Leda laid two eggs (Larousse); some say she laid only one egg (Tripp, Stapleton) which contained Helen and Pollux, who were then considered the children of Zeus in his swan disguise. The other children born from this event, Castor and Clytemnestra, were then considered to be the children of Leda by Tyndareus. Other versions say that it was Nemesis that Zeus coupled with in the form of a swan, and the egg that came of this hatched only Helen. (Tripp, Kerenyi)

Other versions of the story include the egg being found in a marsh and brought to Leda, or the egg being thrown in Leda's lap by Hermes, and hidden in a chest until Helen was born. (Graves, Kerenyi) Of all these versions, the one that seems to be the most well known is that Leda was in fact impregnated by Zeus as a swan; almost everyone agrees to that. Beyond that, it simply depends on whose version you read. Both Kerenyi and Graves list exhaustive footnotes for their sources.

[Note: The story of Leda is one of the more fascinating and even bizarre tales in all of Greek mythology, and there are many variations of it. As is common in Greek

mythology, the various versions of the story conflict. Above and beyond that, the appearance of the egg gives the the whole thing an interesting twist. Graves felt there might be a relationship between this egg and the blood-red egg that the Druids searched for every year at the seashore, which was said to have been laid by the sea serpent Goddess. See Graves 1, p.206-08 for this interesting interpretation. Added to this is the observation by Kerenyi that the word "Leda" is not a Greek name. He connects Leda with the Lycian word "Lada", which meant "woman". The reader can therefore take her/his choice of any number of tantalizing versions and interpretations of Leda's story.]

(Kerenyi, p. 106-07; Graves 1, p. 206-07; Tripp, p. 341; Larousse, p. 188-89)

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It's All Geek to Me:

tales of the Greek Gods by Leah Samul

Mabon 91: Fun with Latin: Translating Useful Everyday Phrases into an Ancient and Practically Useless Language

Yeah, I know--you're wondering why this month's Greek column is dedicated to Latin, right? Elementary, my dear Watson. If I translated everyday sayings into ancient Greek, I'd have to type them in a Greek font. And then, most of you would never be able to read them because most of you don't know the Greek alphabet. So this month, CNL goes Latin! (Put down the fruit basket and maracas, Carmen Miranda, I'm talking about ancient Latin.)

You see, no matter what you want to say, it will sound better in Latin. More sophisticated, more clever, more impressive; this is a language where you can really be a big-time intellectual snob. Plus the extra bonus of no one being able to understand

you. Think of all the insulting remarks and comeback lines you've always yearned to spit out. And if someone does happen to understand one of your Latin remarks, well, you've met another Classics devotee and the two of you will probably have a good laugh (and maybe even some nookie -- I know our readership will love that) . So without further delay, let's Carpe Diem (seize the day) and have a go at it.

Small Talk/Conversation Fillers

- Hot enough for you?
Satine calor is tibi est?
- I think we're on the same wavelength.
Credo nos in fluctu eodem esse.
- You know what I think? I think...
Visne scire quod credam? Credo...
- . . . that all wrestling is fixed.
. . . lictiones omnes praestitutas esse.
- . . .that flying saucers are real.
. . .orbes volantes exstare.
- . . .that Elvis is still alive.
. . .Elvem ipsum etiam vivere.

Bumper Stickers

- I Brake For Animals
Frena pro feris teneo.
- When Catapults Are Outlawed, Only Outlaws Will Have Catapults.
Cum catapultae proscriptae erunt tum, soli proscripti catapultas habebunt.

Insults

- You are a total asshole.
Podex perfectus es.
- You are definitely from Mars.
De stella Martis vere venisti.
- Fuck you and the horse you rode in on!
Futue te ipsum et caballum tuum!

For Sports Fans

- I hate Astroturf.
Gramen artificiosum odi.

- The designated hitter rule has got to go.
Lex clavatoris designati rescindenda est.

- How about those Forty-Niners?
Quid sentis de Undequinquagintis?

Latin in the Business World • Xerox this.
Huius Xerographiam fac.

- You're fired!
Ego te demitto!

- Let's do lunch, really!
Prandeamus, vere!

- Don't you dare erase my hard disk!
Ne auderis delere orbem rigidum meum!

- Garbage in, garbage out.
Purgamentum init, exit purgamentum.

Famous Movie Lines in Latin

- Make my day.
Fac ut gaudeam.

- Round up the usual suspects.
Conlige suspectos semper habitos.

- You know, Toto, I have a feeling we're not in Kansas anymore.
Certe, Toto, sentio nos in Kansate non iam adesse.

Latin for the Disgusting Rabble on the Streets

- I do not have any spare change.
Est mihi nullus nummus superfluus.

- I'm not interested in your dopey religious cult.
Nihil curo de ista tua stulta superstitione.

- If Caesar were alive, you'd be chained to an oar.
Caesar si viveret, ad remum dareris.

Threats in Latin for the Intellectually Superior

- If I were you, I wouldn't walk in front of any catapults.
Cave ne ante ullas catapultas ambules.

- Watch out; you might end up divided into three parts, like Gaul.
Prospice tibi; ut Gallia, tu quoque in tres partes divideris.

- People will soon be referring to you in the past pluperfect tense.
In tempore praeterito plus quam perfecto de te mox dicent.

- Oh yeah? Your mother!
Itane? Tua Mater!

Latin for Embarrassing Situations

- Your fly is open.
Braccae tuae aperiantur.

- Your slip is showing.
Subucula tua apparet.

- You have been misusing the subjunctive.
Abuterebaris modo subjunctivo.

Latin When Speaking to a Psychiatrist

- Sometimes I get this urge to conquer large parts of Europe.
Interdum feror cupidine partium magnarum Europae vincendarum.

- I think some people in togas are plotting against me.
Sentio aliquos togatos contra me conspirare.

Getting Nasty in Latin

- May barbarians invade your personal space!
Utinam barbari spatium proprium tuum invadant!

- May conspirators assassinate you in the mall!
Utinam coniurati te in foro interficiant!

- May you always misuse the subjunctive!
Utinam modo subjunctivo semper male utaris!

Getting Really Nasty

- I have a catapult. Give me all the money, or I will fling an enormous rock at your head.
Catapultam habeo. Nisi pecuniam omnem mihi dabis, ad caput tuum saxum immane mittam.

So there you have it. Latin for every occasion. Now, you may not have suspected it, but this is actually a very sneaky book review. (How else am I going to get away with using all this material without writing to the publisher for permission?) The book I got all this from is titled (surprise) Latin For All Occasions (Villard Books, Random House), by that

brilliant satirist, Henry Beard. Poor Henry took eight years of Latin -- count 'em, eight years! This dude deserves some kind of reward for all that effort. I hereby urge all of our (very highly educated and extremely intelligent) readership to buy this little treasure of sayings in Latin. And until next time, this is Leah of the Greek column; Abeo! (I'm outa here!))

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The Faery Tradition
an interview with Andraste by Leah Samul
reprinted from the Compost Newsletter

Q: Each different tradition in the Craft has its own distinguishing features; what is it about the Faery tradition that makes it different from other traditions in the Craft?

A: Fifteen Faery tradition practitioners met in June of 1988 to discuss this and other questions. What they agreed upon as Faery Tradition essentials comprises the following. Many of these features can be claimed by other traditions as well, and various Faery practitioners may accent some of these more than others.

A belief in a particular Faery Power which can be accessed characterizes the lineage, which exists as an ecstatic, rather than a fertility, tradition. A strong emphasis is placed on sensual experience and awareness, including sexual mysticism, which is not limited to heterosexual expression. In this, as in the general spirit of a spiritual exploration, there is more risk-taking encouraged than in other Wiccan traditions which have specific laws limiting behavior, and there is a certain amorality historically associated with the Tradition. We see ourselves, when enchanted, as "fey"--not black, not white, outside social definitions, on the road to Faeryland, either mad or poetical. We are aware that much of reality is unseen, or at least has uncertain boundaries. As in all the Craft, there is a deep respect for the wisdom of Nature, a love of beauty, and an appreciation of bardic and mantic creativity. There is a specific corpus of chants and liturgical material, much of it stemming from Victor and Gwydion, which provides a frame for Circle-workings, but poetic creativity is highly valued. The practice is heavily invocatory, with encouragement of deity possession, which relies mainly on psychic talent or sensitivity to occur, rather than the existence of a specific induction technique. Rites are stylistically diverse, and may draw from many sources.

There is an initiatory lineage, traceable to Victor, Cora, or Gwydion, although Victor tells of antecedents of the present tradition in the coven in which he was involved in the 1920's and 30's in Oregon. Aspects of the tradition are possession of secret names, the practice of energy-working using the pentacles, a body of poetic and liturgical material, information on the Deities; many archetypes are recognized which are specific to the Tradition, the doctrine of the Three Selves, a cingulum of a specific color, a "tribal" or "clan" feel to the coven, the use of the horned (sometimes called "inverted") pentagram, and to some extent the honoring of a warrior ethic, rather like bushido. For example, we are urged not to coddle weakness, support others in insincerities or self-deceptions, and never submit one's own Life force to anyone or anything, ever, which leads to a fierce openness called the "Black Heart of Innocence."

Perhaps what has gained the most attention is that the Faery Tradition is gender-equal, and all sexual orientations seem to be able to find a niche. For many, there is a strong identification with the realms of Faery and with shape-shifting.

Q: Many members of the Craft would freely admit that modern day Witchcraft has been "put together" from a variety of sources by the leading members of the individual traditions. Gerald Gardner, Raymond Buckland, and even Starhawk have definitely created traditions that bear their own individual stamp. Do you think this is true for Victor Anderson in the Faery tradition? Or more pointedly: is there a Faery tradition separate from Victor Anderson's own writings and influence? Are there other visionaries in the Faery tradition besides Anderson? How much of the Faery tradition do you think that

Victor Anderson "made up" by welding ancient sources to his own personal vision?

A: Although Victor is universally recognized as the founding teacher of the tradition, it is possible to identify influences which shaped the tradition before its present form evolved. There is a strong African diasporic influence, primarily Dahomean-Haitian, and the Three Selves theory is an outgrowth of Huna, as described by Max Freedom Long. Further, there are elements from fiction, including Robert E. Howard, H. P. Lovecraft, and the Necronomicon. Neither is Victor the only source for material presently within the tradition. Each initiate seems to draw the tradition in a somewhat new direction and uncover new ground. According to Gwydion, the early Faery Tradition had much in common with the published materials of the Farrars' accounts of outer-court Gardnerian/Alexandrian rituals. I have not seen this today. Some practitioners, such as Gwydion and Eldri Littlewolf, went deeply into shamanic forms. Gwydion also worked extensively with Celtic religion, even learning Welsh, as did Gabriel (né Caradoc) in the early part of his Wiccan training.

Other influences entered as Gabriel began teaching: Arica training, Tibetan meditation, and a modicum of Ceremonial Magick are all elements. According to Eldri, Caradoc has written some beautiful poetry, both ritual and otherwise, but I have seen little of it. Gabriel's classes are one of the best extant trainings in magical visualization I have encountered. Brian Dragon and members of his lineage have contributed darkly powerful poetry and ritual liturgy, though he was "excommunicated" from the tradition by Caradoc, his initiator, with Victor's assent. This excommunication is not recognized by all members of the tradition. Though there is much borrowing, a central vision is maintained, and this has grown as liturgical material has been amassed. More recently, initiates such as poet Francesca Dubie and songwriter Keara West have added their inspiration to the corpus of material. Since many of the present day initiates have had minimal direct exposure to Victor's presence, and Thorns of the Blood Rose is often out of print, there has been less reliance on Victor's teachings than in earlier days, when Gwydion studied with him for many years, starting at the age of thirteen. Aspects of Victor's practice, such as the African-diasporic tradition, are being strengthened and re-woven into the tradition by initiates with cross-training and initiations in Santeria.

Starhawk has used elements and concepts developed in the Faery Tradition in expressing her beliefs and practice, and in many cases has given the world some of the clearest explanations currently available of concepts such as the Three Selves or the Iron Pentacle.

Q: Looking at the modern day Craft, it seems that there are two main points of focus or approaches to it: one is the shamanic approach, the other is the ecological approach. For example, many covens are active in non-violent action involving the fate of the earth. It seems to me that the Faery tradition is quite shamanistic. Is it at all concerned with the ecological focus that one sees in other branches of the Craft?

A: As the question is posed, I'm not entirely certain what you mean by "ecological" versus "shamanistic" approaches, and I have interpolated that you mean the distinction

between political approaches to magickal activity and religio-magickal approaches. It's hard to answer in general terms for the tradition as a whole, since this topic becomes a spectrum of motivations for magickal workings, rather than a strict dyad between political and religious. Individuals will naturally range themselves along the spectrum, according to their wills and karmic tendencies. Also, the people with whom I prefer to work tend to share my perspectives, and will color my impressions. I wouldn't say someone is not a Faery Tradition practitioner because s/he supported or didn't support a particular political stance. Victor and Starhawk, for example, became estranged over politics and particularly over the issue of nuclear power plants and nuclear research. Political magick of the Reclaiming or Earth First! type often makes "traditionalist" witches uneasy, but this is probably more of a challenge to their political worldview, than a critique of magick as a tool.

Other than the Reclaiming branch of initiates, it is probably safe to say that many of the current practitioners are not openly politically active in demonstrations, civil disobedience, and so forth. But this does not mean that the focus of their magick, or the content of their communications are any less political or even less radical. Politics and religion are not mutually exclusive. The environment is a focus for magickal work throughout the Pagan movement, and the Faery Tradition is no exception. For most of us, our politics grow out of our spirituality, and the mysteries we have experienced, rather than vice-versa.

Q: What is your sense of the place and direction of the Faery Tradition within the neopagan movement?

A: Gods are not just constructs or psychological forces from the collective unconscious. The Gods are real, with a system of morality different from our own, and we have a responsibility to them. The Faery Tradition, in common with initiatory lineages of the Craft which practice possession, is a mystery tradition of power, ecstasy, and direct communication with divinity.

This is in contrast to traditions which practice psychodrama or psychotherapy through ritual. The negative side of this (the Faery) style of working is that we have a lot of initiates who might be classed as "burnouts", who did not return unscathed from between the worlds. the tradition is not for everybody; it is certainly not amenable to mass attendance, like many other Pagan paths. Gabriel has been trying to evolve an outer court and a system of degrees in what was originally a one-degree system. There are more interested seekers than openings with teachers.

Q: If you had a "wish list" for the future of the Faery Tradition within the Neo-Pagan movement, what direction would you like the Faeries to go in?

A: I would like to see a rejoining and sharing among the many "lone-wolves" making up the tradition. It would be nice to be able to learn from one another, to discuss liturgy and magickal techniques, and to cast off the divisions and old feuds that kept our elders from functioning well together. I would like to see the cultivation of high standards of

teaching, ritual practice, and ethics. I would like to see some more of the solitaires starting to teach.

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Valerie Speaks Her Mind:

more than you ever wanted to know about everything from the WebMistress.

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by Valerie Walker

CNL Litha 90

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I have some pretty strange stuff in my collection. One gem is a ten-minute rant called "Devil-Worshipping Whores", read at a coffeehouse by Chris, a Satanist poet decked out in cowboy hat, leather vest, and lots of silver jewelry. Plus a bunch of science-fiction and horror movies which I have acquired on tape over the years. And then, of course, there's my other resources:

My friend Annie, who goes by the sobriquet of Bridget O'Blivion, Queen of the Couch Tomatoes, doesn't just content herself with collecting strange movies from Late Night TV. She gets whole tapes together with the use of a tape editor, including some very bizarre computer animation. Then she redecorates her whole house and gives parties built around these tapes. The last TV ritual she put on was dedicated to the spirit of Barbarella. Annie is such an enthusiast that she's started her very own fanzine, called Spuds.

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CNL, Samhain 1989

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New-Style Witches

- The Metal Witch: Doc Marten shitkicker boots, black tights, Helios Creed T-shirt, black leather jacket, lots of attitude. Hair: black, white, or bald. Eye makeup: the rubbed-in-with-a-dirty-thumb effect. Females add to this basic look a microminiskirt in some stretch material. A meaner, more gritty look than the High-Style type. Skull jewelry in silver; pierced nipples and other appendages. Young; pasty complexions. This look is seen on very skinny men and women, and a few plump females. Favorite color: black. Favorite flavor: intense.
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About this capture

Into the Woods

© 1995 by Valerie Walker

originally published in The Aurora magazine

"In the midst of life, I found myself lost in a dark wood", said Dante in the first lines of his Divine Comedy . As I approach my 57th birthday I find myself wandering in that same wood.

Where did it all go, my youthful drive toward the spiritual, my firm conviction, my loyal allegiance to the Church-of-my-Choice? No matter that the choice changed almost yearly, there was still room enough within the Quaker meeting to hold my slippery beliefs as I evolved from Fundamentalist Christian at eighteen to Goddess- worshipper at thirty-eight. And what happened to the renewed enthusiasm for ritual I underwent then, my dedication to the practice of Wicca, my initiation vow (taken kneeling with one hand beneath my foot and the other on my head) that "all between my two hands belongs to the Goddess"?

What have I kept of those old ways? How much of a Quaker am I still, how much a High Priestess and Witch? And what is the next phase? Here I am, not even knowing what phase the moon is in, getting my inspiration from Northern Exposure and Loren Eiseley's Lives of a Cell have I turned into a materialist? Or was I just fooling myself all those years?

My work: the current Church-of-my-Choice. I am a personal fitness trainer. I'm the one members of the health club go to for advice on how to exercise, eat, take care of their health. It's the modern-day equivalent of being the village wisewoman: I listen to people's problems, encourage them, try to motivate them, serve as a role model, rejoice and grieve with them, and offer my technical expertise in the process of bodily empowerment. No small task.

The role-model aspect, for example: I counsel women in midlife about going through the Change, even as I go through the Change myself. I work out daily not merely to keep my body healthy but also to show that it is still possible to transform oneself even in middle and old age. In fact, the obligation to be a role model is sometimes the only thing that keeps me at it. And self-doubt gnaws. How in hell can I tell people about keeping an even keel through the menopausal storms when I'm barely hanging on myself?

So I express my uncertainties to my clients, to let them know I feel as vulnerable as they do. It is an essential part of my practice, and necessary to my survival, to take (and give) comfort in the flash of recognition between fellow travelers lost in the same dark wood.

No, I don't think my journey so far was foolishness. All between my two hands still belongs to the Goddess. Northern Exposure and Loren Eiseley take their place with my other teachers and mentors: Walt Whitman, Joseph Campbell, Robert Graves, Carl Jung, and every human being I have dealings with, either virtually or in the flesh. The Gods are in eclipse for me now. But that doesn't mean they are gone from the world: they'll be back, in the next fascinating and compelling incarnation.

Avatars? The woods are full of'em.

[Valerie Walker lives in San Francisco. She is a former member of the Society of Friends, an initiated Witch and former High Priestess, and has every episode of Northern Exposure on videotape. She no longer works as a personal fitness trainer; she is now a graphic artist (who still works out). Valerie believes in continuing revelation.]

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moi
In full ritual drag and feeling my oats.

<http://www.compostcoven.org/cnl/crisis.html>
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About this capture

Midlife: Crisis?

by Valerie Walker

CNL Beltaine 90

I've been thinking for some time about my incipient Cronehood; in fact, it's become the main focus of my studies for a master's degree. Right now I'm in the process of constructing a HyperCard stack on osteoporosis, the condition in which people's (usually women's) bones get porous and soft and fragile, leading to breakage, disability, and in many cases, death. You know, all those old people who fall, break a hip, then die of pneumonia? Well, actually, their bones are so fragile, they break the hip just by standing up, then fall, THEN die. It's also a large source of disfigurement: why are little old ladies little? Because they shrink, due to osteoporosis, so their ribs end up sitting on their pelvic bones.

Not pleasant; but not entirely unavoidable. If people will start taking care of themselves earlier in life, old age does not need to be as tortuous as it seems. Midlife--the thirties, forties, and fifties--is certainly not too early to begin. The following is taken directly from my Osteoporosis stack, which is aimed at women aged 30 to 50. If the ritual, etc., seem a little generic, it's because my target population is not necessarily Witch or even Pagan. Many of these women are not used to, or are even afraid of the word "Crone." I'm trying to do what I can to motivate them to accept the Crone, respect Her, and even (dare it be said?) love Her.

Midlife is in some ways as traumatic as adolescence: if you are female, not only are you going through physical changes, but you probably have to be the caregiver for both your children and your parents. Midlife people are the "sandwich generation"--and midlife women are the majority of caregivers. So you need to take care of yourself, too, and not just in physical ways.

Many of us have older parents, who have been partially or completely disabled by osteoporosis and other diseases which come from misuse and disuse. They serve as negative role models in that many of them have been subsisting on inadequate diets inadequate for years, and few of them are accustomed to be physically active. Many of them are smokers, and many drink. (Alcohol, smoking, and caffeine are all risk factors for osteoporosis as well as heart disease and cancer.)

It is easy to say, "well, just kick the habit!", but the problem is not so simple. These habits begin when young, and are harder to break the older one gets. Elders, who may have been overusing or even abusing these toxins for years, are at greatest risk. It is difficult for them to give up their few pleasures, and a cup of coffee, a smoke, or a drink

is more than the mere intake of a chemical substance. It is a social ritual, and for people whose social roles have dwindled into the underclass of the old, these social rituals become even more important than they did when they were merely adjuncts to life as a fully-functioning member of society.

It is not pleasant to contemplate this as a picture of your own old age. The time to quit is NOW. But, with all the other stresses and responsibilities you have in midlife, especially as a midlife woman, it sometimes feels as if the entire world is resting on your shoulders. You're not crazy--it IS a lot of responsibility. But you don't have to get into crisis mode. There are things you can do. Here are some suggestions:

- One thing you can do for yourself (aside from working on your diet, exercise, smoking, and so on) is to get together with other people who are in the same boat. I recently joined a midlife women's support group, which we call "The Menotones." We meet at each others' homes twice a month. Each one of us get a chance to talk about what's going on with her, physically, mentally, emotionally and spiritually. There is a lot of conversation about menopause and its effects, since most of us are either into it or approaching it; but it is far from the only subject of conversation. We laugh, we cry, we sympathize, we cackle with glee. These funny, talented, intelligent and interesting people have become a source of real support and encouragement to me. You might want to try getting together with other women--it's still true that Sisterhood is Powerful.

- Another thing you can do to take care of yourself is to use your solitary time as a way of spiritual growth. While you take a bath, for example, do it by candlelight, burn a little incense, and meditate. Pray to whatever forces you believe run the universe; tap in to cosmic energy for self-renewal. Even if you only have time for a brief shower, feel the water washing away all the psychic crud as well as the dirt. A cup of water can be the ocean, into which you mentally throw all the things you don't need or want in your life. Then ask the ocean to return it to you as energy you can use, and take a sip.

- Stop and smell the roses. Take a breather every so often during the day to step back from whatever you're doing and look at the immensity of the universe (after a session in the cadaver lab in Human Anatomy class, I used to go to the media center at school and check out videotapes of "Cosmos"), or, conversely, look very closely at a flower or a leaf. Think about the fact that we are just about halfway between the biggest things in the universe (galaxy clusters) and the smallest (subatomic particles). Gaze at the moon. Write a poem. Draw a picture.

- Orient yourself. Face each of the four directions in turn and think about these things:

- East: the powers of the mind, the pleasures of the intellect, the keenness of your mind in cutting like a knife between the true and the false.

- South: the powers of the will, the strong urge to achieve and master, the fine electricity that burns along your neural pathways.

- West: the powers of emotion, the sweep and rush of feeling, the flow of your blood from your heart to your whole body to your heart again.
- North: the powers of the body, the strength and sturdiness of your muscles, one creature of earth among the whole family.
- And the center: you are at the center of your world. When you know where you are in the world, you know who you are.
- Feel beautiful. Greet the Maiden in you that was you as a young girl; the Mother in you that has nurtured so many others; the Crone in you that is being born. Look at your face in the mirror, and say sincerely, "I love you."

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moi
In full ritual drag and feeling my oats.

<http://www.compostcoven.org/cnl/monsters.html>
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About this capture

Monsters from the Id
by Valerie Walker
CNL Samhain 1988

Have you noticed how many movies, books, TV shows, comic books and so on are concentrated on themes from the demonic? Have you noticed the growing focus on the demonic on the part of scare-mongers, Fundies, would-be censors, and other public watchdogs who find Satan under every bed and Satanists responsible for every missing kid? Does this remind you of anything, like, say, the media assault on Jews and the "International Jewish Conspiracy" in pre WWII Germany? Does this scare you at all? It should.

As a publicly-avowed Witch, I find myself in an interesting position. I have always been confronted with the usual question, "Are you a Good Witch or a Bad Witch?" (to which I usually am tempted to reply "why, I'm not a witch at all -- I'm Dorothy Gale, from Kansas"); but lately, when people see my pentacle necklace, they get a rather strange look on their faces when they ask, "Isn't that devil worship?" The explanations I give, that no, no, Witches a) are not the same thing as Satanists; b) wear our pentacles point up, not point down; c) worship the Goddess; and d) are pre-Judeo/Christian, and thus pre-Satan, have been getting longer. But the interminable media assault does not help a bit.

It seems to me that the real reason for all this hoo-ha about the Devil is the good old psychological concept of PROJECTION. Just as the Germans were able to scapegoat the Jews for all the socioeconomic and psychological ills among them for which they saw no cure, the many, MANY disaffected, disappointed, disenfranchised people in this country can blame it on the Devil and his works. Look around you. Homeless people sleeping in the streets, political leaders trafficking in drugs and child prostitutes, kids on crack, AIDS, the fucked-up environment (rain forest, ozone level, endangered species, acid rain, etc., etc.), more and more reports of child abuse (not that it never happened before, but now we are hearing about it more), threats of nuclear war, terrorist attacks on innocent bystanders throughout the world, famine, flood, earthquake...looks like the Kali Yuga if I ever saw one. And what are the good Christian people of the U.S. of A. getting off their duffs to do? Picket abortion clinics and movies.

Illogical, as Spock would say. Let us look at where these feeling originate: insecurity, fear, a clinging to a vision of an ideal America that never was outside of the Donna Reed Show; and a hatred of the evil which allows this to be a time comparable to the worst eras of history. And where does this evil come from, if not inside ourselves?

In the movie "Forbidden Planet", the scientist Dr. Morbius tries to become godlike with the aid of the technology of a long-vanished race; instead, he only succeeds in releasing the power of the "monsters from the Id", his Shadow side, which is indiscriminately destructive and is killed only by his own suicide. The point apparently is that it was Morbius' quest for knowledge that led to his downfall. This is the typical attitude of science-fiction films of the late 50s and 60s, that science had opened doors it can't close, and that it was wrong to have opened them. This, of course, was based on the perfectly reasonable assumption that scientists and governmental officials, being human, would not be able to handle knowledge which is so far ahead of our social, economic, and psychological ways of handling it. We are still trying to get used to stone axes, and we're playing with nuclear weapons.

Things haven't changed that much since the 50s, only intensified as the stockpiles of weapons and facts grow larger and more dangerous. It is gradually sinking into the collective unconscious that the gun is really loaded; but we aren't quite to the point of figuring out how to put it down. So, instead, we bundle up our fears, our Monsters from the Id, and blame someone else. Blame the Satanists, blame the Jews, blame the Commies, blame the immigrants, blame those assholes on the other side, but don't blame me.

People, let's get our shit together and just stop blaming anybody. You don't blame a child for ignorance-- you teach it to know better. Let's try to teach ourselves to know better, to realize that the only Devil is the one each of us and all of us have constructed out of our own fears and greed. We have to be kinder to ourselves and each other, to stop trying to meet the Monsters from the Id with more monsters of strength and power (a losing battle), but to admit, "yeah, that's part of me too, and I have to cop to it."

To defuse its power rather than trying to meet it head-on is the only way to win out over the power of the demonic, whether individual or collective. And the only place to start is where you are, who you are. As Scoop Nisker says, "If you don't like the news, go out and make some of your own."

"More than at any time in history mankind faces a crossroads. One path leads to despair and utter hopelessness, the other to total extinction. Let us pray that we have the wisdom to choose correctly." --Woody Allen

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moi

In full ritual drag and feeling my oats.

<http://www.compostcoven.org/cnl/lineage.html>

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About this capture

Secrets of the Craft Revealed
by Valerie Walker
CNL Spring 94

I have been happily out of contact with the local Craft community (an oxymoron?) for several years now. But my co-covener (let's call her Grizelda) keeps me up on the latest scandals. Grizelda phoned yesterday, ticked off because a woman she's been studying with (let's call her ChloĀ), a Big-Time Witch and initiate of the Faery Tradition, is refusing to give some eyes-only Faery information to any members of Compost because a former Compost H.P.s. and Big-Time Witch (let's call her Starhawk, shall we?), told ChloĀ that none of the Composters I initiated was really in the Faery Trad, because Starhawk didn't give me a real Faery initiation (did you get all that?)

Oh, the shame of it all, after all these years, to find out that my lineage is illegitimate! Does this mean I have to turn in the Secret Decoder Ring?

Our favorite Witchy symbol, the pentacle, symbolizes the human being in relation to the universe. One writer says that if one point is up, you rule your life with your head, but if it's two points up, you rule your life with your ass. I wish these Big-Time Witches would get their pentacles right-side up. Denying information to sincere seekers (who, legitimacy of lineage aside, have been practicing Witches for decades) is very small-time. Yeah, I know, "power shared is power lost"; but information is not quite the same thing as power. Information shared is information gained and multiplied. And surely in the 1990s we can quit looking for power to the secrecies of Gardnerianism, back through the deeps of time to, what was it, September 1939? Any Fam-Trad Witch from before that time doesn't regard us johnny-come-latelies as legitimate; they don't even let us know who they are. So, since the majority of Witches extant (Fam-Trad aside) don't trace their lineage past the time I was a year old, whose lineage is legitimate?

I believe in continuing revelation of spiritual matters. The Gods don't just give us the Word and walk away. After vowing that "all between my two hands belongs to the Goddess," I have to keep finding out what that means on a daily basis for the rest of my life. This means that I am no better than any other person, initiated or not, or by whom, or with what ceremonies, if I don't use this revelation to shape my life.

After a while all this Secret Lore doodah stops being fun and starts to feel mean-spirited. When I was teaching, I was appalled at how easy it was to acquire groupies to massage my ego in exchange for being in on the Secret Lore of the Craft. And I could have told them ANYTHING -- very little reality-checking goes on among disciples. (Remember Jonestown?) Having and withholding secrets is a cheap way of acquiring power over people. And it's not good for anyone involved, adept or disciple, if there's even the least hint of power games. (But, of course, none of us have to worry about THAT.)

The real Secret Info isn't the handshake or the password. It's not the message decipherable only by the Secret Decoder Ring. The Real Deal's the stuff that can't be told because it's untellable, because it's passed on experientially and spiritually, and discovered anew by each generation. It's the kind of knowledge that generations of initiates of the Eleusinian Mysteries did not reveal over hundreds of years. Literally, you

hadda be there.

The most effective way of teaching a body of knowledge to another person (whether it's Magickal, mystical, esoteric, artistic, physical, or even scientific) is to speak to that person's condition. Teach them to question authority, even yours. Show them by the way you live that the Real Deal has to be grown for oneself, in one's own heart and out of one's own experience. All acts of love and pleasure are Her rituals: Magick works. But the spells and rituals which work the best are the ones you make out of your own juice. You don't need to know the handshake or the password to make your life better; you grow your own. And you can get the Decoder Ring out of a box of Cracker Jack.

Intent is EVERYTHING. And that's the only secret there is.

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moi
In full ritual drag and feeling my oats.

<http://www.compostcoven.org/cnl/word.html>

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About this capture

More on the W-Word

©1990, 1996 Valerie Walker

(Originally published in the Compost NewsLetter and several other WitchZines)

Boy, I am starting to get peeved at all this "let's-not-call-ourselves-Witches" talk that's being printed lately in various 'zines. The general argument is that the W-word has accumulated such bad vibes through the centuries of repression/suppression that it's impossible to clean it enough for us to be able to present ourselves as a genuine religion in the eyes of most nonPagans. The wish of many Witches to identify with the martyrs of the Burning Times and make their sacrifice seem less in vain is brushed aside by the argument that the Craft as we know it was invented out of whole cloth by Gerald Gardner in the late 1930's, so we don't have any right to the name "Witch."

As to the latter point: I don't give a flying rat's tail whether the Craft was invented, or whether it comes direct to us from millennia of secret mother-to-daughter transmission. It's a living religion as far as I'm concerned, and since I believe in the concept of continuing revelation from the Divine, I feel perfectly free to go on inventing it day by day, and to call myself a Witch whether or not I am adhering to the teachings of Gerald (which I'm not) or the practices of the Medieval Witches (which I'm not), or even the age-old matriarchal traditions which I got from my fifty-times-great-grandmother (which I'm not).

As to the social acceptability of the W-word: When I was first initiated I became Priestess and Witch in the sight of Gods and men. This was a vow I took, and take, very seriously, even though I don't take too many things that way. I became a Witch in my own eyes and in the eyes of the Craft, AND in the eyes of the world. I'm public. I use my civilian name on my Magickal publishing and writing because I feel that it's a matter of honoring that vow. If it didn't mean a difference to my life to swear that "all between my two hands belongs to the Goddess", what was the point of doing it? I'm really tired of all the New Wagers who have glommed on to the Goddess and are busy making huge sums of money by picturing Her as Big Mama to replace Big Daddy; all they have done is added tits to Jahweh and put a smile on her face. The Goddess is a LOT more than that. She's Big. She's Bad. She's Dangerous. And her service is not for the cowardly.

I realize that there are many people who have to keep quiet about what they are, because to go public might put their jobs or even safety in jeopardy; I'm fortunate in being self-employed and living in a relatively tolerant part of the USA. But if you are going to go public with any of the facts, to talk religion at all, you should be honest enough to cop to who you really are. Giving in to repression only encourages it. I use the word Witch in the in-your-face way certain gay men use the word "faggot", or blacks the word "nigger". I'm a Witch--you got a problem with that? If you do, let's talk about it, but don't expect me to back down or hide.

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moi
In full ritual drag and feeling my oats.

<http://www.wiggage.com/cnlfic/brigitte.html>

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About this capture

The wit and wisdom of the outrageous Brigit Brat
reprinted from the Compost NewsLetter

Brigitte Steps Out
reprinted from the Compost NewsLetter
by Valerie Walker
CNL Samhain 1990

It's really all Ron's fault.

If he hadn't come home and asked if I wanted to go see Bobby the pastry chef perform in Shock Treatment, a drag show playing in Walnut Creek, I don't think any of this would have happened. But he did, and I said sure, fine, sounds like fun.... but Walnut Creek?

The club, Just Rewards, is in a business-park sort of area just off the highway; not the sort of location you'd expect to find much of anything. But it's an interesting place. On Sundays from 3 to 9 p.m. it's a lesbian country-western bar, and after nine it alternates between Shock Treatment and male strippers. The country dykes usually hang out for the drag/strip shows, so the audience is a mix of jeans-and-plaid, glitter-and-leather, and suit-and-tie. All very friendly, too. On our first visit, Ron and I meet a wonderful woman named Martha (jeans-and-plaid), generous with tips on the best time to get there, places to sit, and dancers to watch.

We perch precariously on a shelf as the show begins. Two performers blow us away: Cartoona Strip (Bobby) and Michael Angelo, the King of Drag. 'Toona is entirely unlike Bobby: where he's quiet and unassuming, she's an in-your-face, totally wild and athletic performer who leaps up on tables, in laps, all over the club, fast and furious; where he's a nice-looking guy who tends to fade into the woodwork, she's rampantly sexy. Her costumes tend to wander north as she gets energetic--one little number begins as a dress and ends as a crop-top. And wasn't that miniskirt an old Fifties-style girdle?

Michael Angelo, on the other hand, is a barrel-shaped, Mohawked example of total and complete gender-bending, with the most incredible costumes this side of Hollywood--all self-designed and -made. Neither of them take themselves as seriously as the Cher and Tina Turner knockoffs usually found in drag shows--and the audience loves them. Ron and I decide that BG MUST see this show and meet these people. BG agrees, and thinks this would be a nice time to come out in public drag.

So two weeks later, after hours of planning (costume, makeup, shoes, omigawd, SHOES!!!) and an extended glamour attack at our house (This belt or This one? The dog collar? the five-inch fuck-me pumps or the four-inch patents with the ankle straps? Earrings, omigawd, earrings! Hair up or hair down? Can I borrow an evening purse?) BGwobbles to his feet (a full seven foot five, what with the heels and the hair), reborn as --Brigitte!!!

It's a rainy night, and I'm glad Ron is driving -- no way could Brigitte manage in those shoes. She can barely walk. We get to the club early and grab a table right up front in the middle. Martha is there and hails us cheerfully with the news that everybody is planning to give Brigitte a special welcome, since it's her first time out in public.

The show starts. Cockatelia makes a passing reference to tall blondes, but it isn't until 'Toona comes on that Brigitte gets much attention from the stage. Too much attention, unfortunately. In whipping her leg around, 'Toona catches Brigitte a hefty Klongggg!! on the head with her knee. Brigitte is, to put it mildly, discomposed. "Ow, my neck. I think it's dislocated..."

A short intermission, during which I help Brigitte stagger to the bar and recover her poise. I point out that 'Toona treated her gently in comparison to the man at the fourth table back, whose head was nearly snapped off.

Another number, this one a duet by Michael Angelo and 'Toona to "The Homecoming Queen's Got a Gun," during which Michael Angelo as the Homecoming Queen, using a blow-dryer as a gun, interacts with the audience. (Actually, he thrusts it down Ron's throat, if you must know.)

At last, the finale: Nina Hagen's "Sunday School." Several performers enter the stage in white veils and robes. As the chorus begins, Michael Angelo, swathed in black, appears. He spreads his arms wide to reveal a lethal-looking black patent-leather bustier with huge pointy tits, studded with safety pins. He struts through the audience, menacing various victims with his massive enbonpoint, then back to the stage. Uh-oh... He's coming to our table. He's approaching Brigitte. He's grabbed her hair! He's got her by the hair and is burying her face in his bustier! He's mashing her face into the safety pins! Ow! She's bleeding! She's pissed off! She rises to her feet, grabs my hand, and yanks me along the hall to the ladies' room, where I attempt to stanch the blood with wet paper towels. Brigitte is incensed. To make matters worse, the ladies' room is visited by a parade of country dykes who seem to be taking the matter far too lightly. I mop away

at the small gash in her forehead. The door opens, and Michael Angelo surges into the room, talking fast: "Oh hey I'm sorry man it was an accident you look TOADLY fabulous in that outfit would you like to sing a number with us sometime?"

Brigitte pulls herself to her full height. (I am trying to mop the blood while keeping a straight face, no easy task.) From all the dignity of seven foot five (including heels and hair), Brigitte says awfully, "my music is SERIOUS."

The rest of the evening is a blur for me. I recall trying simultaneously to bring Brigitte out of a Major Snit, keep Michael Angelo from flying into a retaliatory Major Snit, and stop laughing. (None of these attempts was successful.) I don't even remember the trip home.

But I can't say the evening was a loss. I had been witness to (and instigator of) an Historic Moment. Brigitte had been blooded (literally) and was well on her way into the ranks of Great Drag Queens. She has armed herself with a natty little black leather riding crop for defensive purposes. And Ron and I will dine out on this story for a long time to come.

Update: Michael Angelo has since died of AIDS, Shock Treatment disbanded, and I don't know what Bobby's up to these days; but Brigitte (now known as Brigit Brat, aka God's Girlfriend) is alive and kicking, recording and performing and living as a girl fulltime. She's taking estrogen and looks just like a giant version of Barbie....and she finally learned how to walk in those heels. Definitely a better woman than I am.

Brigit

The lovely and talented Ms. Brat

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<http://www.wiggage.com/cnlfic/jomama.html>

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About this capture

CNL: Stories

reprinted from the Compost NewsLetter

The Rant of JoMama

by Valerie Walker

[The following document was found mysteriously on my hard disk after a massive power surge which crashed the application I was working on at the time. Transmission appears to have been made via modem, but the source is unknown. How the message got through while the computer and modem were shut down is unexplained--vw]

FROM

Church of Jomama, Inner Temple of the Ho' Cuisine, Rev. Mother Val I. Dated

TO

All Adepts

SUBJECT

The Real Truth about "Bob" Dobbs' Origin, marriage, children, and connections to

JOMAMA

The Conspiracy has managed to insert its tentacles even into the innermost reaches of the Church of the SubGenius' hierarchy; corrupting, deceiving, mis-translating, misinterpreting, so that even those SubGenii who are not direct agents are in danger of becoming pawns--without their knowledge or desire. Nowhere is this found more evident than in the published accounts of the origin, early life, marriage, and family life of J.R. "Bob" Dobbs, Grand SlackMaster of the Church. Indeed, some of "Bob"'s most cherished utterances have been so distorted by those around him--closet Pinks and Conspiracy double-agents-- that the great mass of Subs are completely TURNED AROUND.

The First Cause of "Bob", his real father, was not the shadowy figure of the quasi-Jewish wandering milkman with which the upper Hierarchs of the Church seek to explain "Bob"'s origin. No, friends, the real Truth is more shocking than that. Due to a time-warp during his Sacred Emaculation, "Bob" was transported backward in time into the bed of HIS OWN MOTHER, Jane McBride Dobbs. From their Mystic Marriage (one with very ancient precedent in previous Boblives) not one, but TWO children were born. One was "Bob", making him his own father. The other was his twin sister, "Connie", whose birth was concealed and who was hidden away by the Disciples of Jomama (but more about this later) until a further Mystic Marriage was arranged between the brother and sister. This was done in order to further purify and concentrate the Dobbs Gene, and to produce the Dobbs Children. Unfortunately, all the boys ("Bubba", Bobby Jr., Adam Kadmon, Shem, and Shaun) were halfwitted due to this inbreeding.

It was not until "Bob" and "Connie"'s sixth child, a daughter, was born that the experiment proved successful. The girl's name was kept secret, and is to this day never mentioned; but she has taken the name of AMNESIA DOBBS, and is known by it in Inner Circles. Amnesia was a true Child of JOMAMA, and at the age of sixteen left home to become a Priestess in the Cult of JOMAMA. She rose rapidly in cult ranks, and is now Supreme Prophetess of JOMAMA, trying her best to overcome the errors which her father inadvertently committed and which (even though "Bob" himself has seen the light) his aides in the Church of the SubGenius continue to promulgate.

What are these errors? The first and most glaring one is the substitution of the God of Wrath, JHVH-1, for the Goddess, His Own Mother and Mother of All the Gods, JOMAMA (Praise to Her Holy Name!). Due to the understandable confusion of "Bob"'s mental faculties during his Emaculatory Ordeal, and the shock to his system of having swived his own parent (also one of the High Priestesses of JOMAMA), he went into a catatonic state, during which the memories of this period were blotted out, and only the evidence of the recordings remained. He was so affected by this that he would not even listen to them for years; by the time he did, agents of the Conspiracy had managed to effect alterations in the text, replacing JHVH for JOMAMA, and generally corrupting and altering Her Sacred Message from one of Joyous Chaos to one of Macho Despair. Thus it was that the entire Church of the SubGenius was founded on mistaken concepts, and the lives of millions were made miserable.

But the Hand of JOMAMA was not idle during this time. Her minions, the Hookers from Space, were at work. They contacted "Connie" and arranged her marriage to "Bob". When little Amnesia was born, they saw to it that "Connie" trained the child secretly in the doctrines and esoteric rites of JOMAMA; this was easy to conceal from the rest of the family, since the boys were all feeble-minded and "Bob" was often away from home on sales trips, and later, on Church of the SubGenius affairs. Thus it was that the Women's Mysteries were celebrated in the very Dobbshome which later became a symbol of male-dominated machofamily consciousness. Deep in the basement, behind the furnace, the ritual robes and Magickal artifacts of young Amnesia and her mother were stored, including one un-altered copy of the Original Prescriptions tape, the one with the TRUE Vision of Dobbs, the Vision that "Bob" was later to deny and the Conspiracy dupes in his organization to suppress. At the age of sixteen, young Amnesia, with the aid of her mother and grandmother (also her aunt and great-grandmother) "Connie" and Jane, made her escape from the ties that bind. Purchasing a ticket on the Greyhound to Omaha, Nebraska, and taking her few possessions in a Fiorucci tote-bag, she made her way by devious routes to a secret location, where she was picked up by one of JOMAMA's Saucers and transported to her new life as Prophet and Hooker from Space.

Her training period was passed in intergalactic space. Here she learned the Erotic and Culinary Arts, and grew to know the other Hookers: Traci, Candi, Barbi, Tammi, Suzi, Shari, Sandi, Judi, Kathi, Staci, Randi, and Kim. Much of this time must remain uncharted, for reasons of religious secrecy. What we do know, however, is that during this time Amnesia Dobbs decided that it was her responsibility to return to this planet and save it from the mistakes of her well-meaning but misguided father (also her grandfather), "Bob" Dobbs. In this worthy aim she was joined by the Hookers from Space; they have all returned to Earth to preach the Good News of JOMAMA, and to obtain as many Vital Bodily Fluids of the Earth-inhabitants as possible, in order to be able to re-create the human race if things go as badly as the worst-case scenario predicts.

In this worthy aim they have been joined by those of us who are Children of JOMAMA, who have Heard the Word, who have Eaten of the Ho'Cuisine, who have Munched on the Breakfast of Life, who have Heard and Attended the Call of JOMAMA: "Manja, manja!" We are the ones who say Pfui! to Masculist Desperation, who Know and are Known by Energy-Beings of the highest Sexual and Culinary Potency, whose Vital Bodily Fluids are in storage in the Sacred Sperm-and-Eggs-over-Easy tanks of JOMAMA. We are the Protein-Filled, the Vitamin-Enriched, the Well-Fed! We utter the Mystic Chant : "GI-ME-MO-BOB-E-CUE!" We know the True Vision of "Bob", which he has at last come to see himself! we are one in JOMAMA with "Bob", and the energy-vortex of her Divine Effluvium swirls around us and in us and through us! We eat a good breakfast every single day, and we get laid without even trying! HOT DOG! We challenge any weenie-bearing Pinkboy or Mediocreitin to survive a night with the Heavenly Ho's! "The Road of Excess Leads to the Palace of Wisdom", said William Blake--Blake knew the Brides O' Bob, the DobbsDaughters, for before JHVH was a

gleam in JOMAMA's eye, the Hookers from Space were plying their trade in all the worlds and between the worlds! Her Message has not yet been fully revealed, for Revelation is Continual, and new recipes are created every instant. But if you will attend to her Sacred Precepts and Eat Hearty, you will attain Slack.

Yes, friends, Instant Slack can be yours, the pleasant and easy way! No more Macho Masochism--no more Self-Flagellation, no more Hangovers, no more Deprivation! Just Manja! Manja!, and a simple physical process will take place which will lead you to AUTOMATIC SLACK! What is this physical process? It is known among scientists as POST-PRANDIAL DIP. No, not the kind you dunk bits of cauliflower into; no, not the dance; but the dip you experience after a hearty meal when all the blood leaves your head and goes to your stomach to aid in the digestive process. This feeling is the closest you can get to Terminal Slack without the aid of drugs (except, of course, for Orgasmic Spasm, but PPD lasts a lot longer), and it's available to everyone, regardless of race, creed, gender, intelligence, or level of enlightenment. Why, even Macho Masochist Desperadoes can undergo PPD--JOMAMA spreads her Mercies universally, and asks for no reward. But we, her Children, say: Give JOMAMA some Credit, because, friends, even the Gods need Slack. So, when you've gotten off a really satisfying Spasm, taken a healthy Shit, birthed a Nine-Pound Infant, eaten a Hearty Meal--How do you spell "Relief?" We Spell it JOMAMA. Bless her Name!

Yours in the ever-flowing Blessings of JOMAMA,
Rev. Mother V.

Valerie

Valerie Walker

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CNL: Stories

reprinted from the Compost NewsLetter

Mistress Valerie's House of Pain

© 1991 by Valerie Walker

Recently our good friend Brigitte and her good friend Damian decided to open a bondage & domination business down on the Peninsula. Safe, discreet, no sex, no drugs, nothing the vice cops could bust or the neighbors complain about -- just a friendly little place to get your buns warmed by your choice of a blonde "seven-foot-tall transvestite Bitch Goddess" or a wraithlike brunette "Evil Lesbian Vampire" (their own self-descriptions, not mine).

Talking this concept over with another friend who has experience in the B&D; biz, I asked, "just what do people do at these places?"

"Well, when I was a mistress, I had this big huge old bullwhip, and, since I'm Latina, I got to do the whole Conchita number -- flower behind the ear, leather teddy, high heels, flashing teeth, cracking the whip, and so on. Some of them I'd force to wash my dishes. And then there was one guy who I'd just chain to the wall and take his credit card and go and jam for a couple of hours. When I'd get back, he'd still be hanging on the wall, sighing, 'Oh, I missed you!' I never had to fuck any of them; it was fun, but boy, was it neurotic!"

This set my imagination going. You can make a very nice living (up to \$500 per hour,

I'm told) indulging people's little fantasies; but the fantasies I've heard about are all so...overdramatic. How about a Bondage House which truly reflects life as we live it today?

In Mistress Valerie's House of Pain, you would be able to get services such as:

- Telephone System: gives you pre-recorded messages which become reiterative loops, leaving you in limbo forever (this one borrowed directly from ASPEN).
- Office Receptionist (your choice of New Yorker, Snotty Britisher, Hostile Black Militant, or Non-English-Speaker): snaps gum in your face, refuses to respond to your questions because she is busy talking to her friends on the telephone, and forces you to undress, fill in a thirty-page form (in ink), and wait naked in a room alone with a copy of American Journal of Nursing for three hours (courtesy Kaiser Hospital).
- Mom: the middle-aged housewife (your choice of Jewish or Italian Catholic) in curlers, frowsy chenille bathrobe, and fuzzy slippers who nags you about where your life is going, how much of a disappointment you are to all your family, and why you are never going to be half as good as your brother/sister/neighbor's kid/(insert name).
- Blind Date From Hell: you walk into a room, and there is this really ugly, smelly, sloppy, ill-dressed, bad-complexioned, unpleasant, whiny, arrogant, sexist, politically incorrect, rude, uncouth creature of indeterminate gender, seated next to this really gorgeous hunk of masculinity or femininity (depending on your preference); you have your choice of which one with whom to spend the evening. The catch is that the gorgeous one is in the active stages of a rather nasty (but non-fatal) infectious disease.
- Gridlock: for the next few hours, you are put behind the wheel of a car, stuck in the westbound approach to the tollbooths on the Oakland Bay Bridge (or bridge of your choice), just behind a bus which is belching out thick clouds of toxic gases. The temperature and humidity are both 98 degrees, there is no air conditioning, the seats are covered with vinyl, and you are wearing shorts. The radio brings in only foreign-language stations and Fundie preachers. You don't have any money for the tollbooth. And you need to go to the bathroom.
- San Francisco State University (or college of your choice): you try to register for five classes you need to take in order to graduate. They are in five different departments, and you need the signatures of each department head and each instructor in order to get permission to enter each class. The department heads are all on vacation, the instructors are not available by telephone or in person, and none of the department

secretaries speak any English.

- Restaurant: the hostess has no record of your reservation, but after an argument you manage to get a dirty table right next to the kitchen so you can hear the cooks screaming at each other in foreign tongues. The busboy brushes crumbs of Mystery Grease onto your lap. The lighting is just a little too dim for you to be able to read the menu. After an hour or so the waiter deigns to come over and take your order. He never returns to your table, while people at other tables are served, eat, leave, and are replaced. Finally the busboy brings you some bread. You bite into it and break a tooth. Three hours later a different waiter brings your food. It is not what you ordered, it is cold and greasy, and it smells peculiar; but you eat it anyway. As you get up to leave, you realize that you have forgotten your wallet.

Other scenarios include: Unemployment Office; Final Examination; Getting Past the Doorman at the Trendy Club; Job Interview; Children's Birthday Party; Last-Minute Xmas Shopping; High School Prom; Dentist; Thanksgiving at the In-Laws'; Busted!; and many others too numerous to describe. But you get the idea.

These tortures are not for the weak. Only those truly dedicated to pain, humiliation, and suffering will voluntarily submit to this kind of treatment. But at Mistress Valerie's House of Pain, you can find all this...and more...

...I believe they call it Real Life.

Valerie

Valerie Walker

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The wit and wisdom of the outrageous Brigit Brat

reprinted from the Compost NewsLetter

Mabon 1989

The need for Pagan Politicians

OK-- most of you just said "WHAT!"

But just read up, sillies. I feel it is high time that we as pagans took a much higher profile in local, state, national, and international politics. Why, you ask? Simple SURVIVAL.

The Born-Again moneymakers and the sensationalist media scum have already done a very good job of distorting the public's view of pagan practices. After the Geraldo (Jerry Rivers) special, I even had to reassure my mother that we have never killed babies or raped children in our rites.

It is all too easy for people like Geraldo (the bastion of journalistic integrity), thermally damaged overweight ex-cops (Maury Terry), and sexually frustrated evangelists to associate witches with Satanists, child abusers, junkies, and (of course) head-banging cock-rock heroes.

Now most Pagans live in fear of public exposure (I could lose my job, the police would be watching me along with the FBI, CIA, and any other wacked twice-born christian groups). OK, that is a valid fear, but an unnecessary one. If witches are shown to the public in a positive INTELLIGENT and RESPONSIBLE fashion, our numbers would increase and public opinion change from fear and humorous amusement to respect and empathy.

The problems as I see them:

We need to be publicly accessible

We are not going to be arrested for our religion. The more we hide, the easier it is for those who profit from turning the fear of the unenlightened population into a political moneymaking power base to misinform the public. This could quite conceivably result in our annihilation. If, however, we are highly visible, vocal, and ready to debate with the would-be Witch hunters, then we can maintain a useful presence in society. There are great number of people searching for something like Wicca (it is after all becoming politically correct and quite fashionable - check out Vogue's big fall issue). If we can not be found we can't be joined.

Pagan representation

If the media wants to have a witch on a talk show, they almost always dig up the spooky types, the majority of whom are inarticulate, uncomfortable with debates, and a few steps removed from being Rainbow-Chasing Smurf-Worshippers. This is not good for our credibility. We need hard-nosed spokes people appointed by region (and if applicable expertise in specific areas to be publicly debated).

Networking facilities

I know if I open up my copy of Drawing Down the Moon I can find listings of numerous organizations, most of which are loosely organized and slow to respond. We NEED a hardened, fortified, permanent national/international 24 hour networking service with an 800 number. This service could serve as a communications link between multiple established groups, as well as a link for those seeking others or other established groups. This network could also put people in contact with the talent and services that exist in the Pagan community. and serve as a Pagan community news service.

Airplay

BACs (Born-Againers) have nationally televised shows and even networks; we need air time. I am not suggesting a Pagan PTL, but rather a televised news and networking show that could cover areas from ritual structures, research of the numerous traditions of earth religion, to earth (eco) News.

Pagan Lobbyists

That's right -- stuffed shirts in Washington who get paid to whine and plead the case of the group they represent to the congressmen and -women who ultimately write the laws. If we don't have them, laws are written that don't take into account the pagan perspective. This is extremely important if we would wish to separate the Church (christian) from the State.

Attitudes and Actions

I feel that the only measure of a religion's worth is whether it can create attitudes in its followers that are conducive to the survival of the human race on the planet. Since Pagan beliefs teach the interdependence and synchronicity of all things and events, we probably would serve as excellent guide and models for humanity (but, then again, looking at all of the airheads and 60's leftovers and the yuppie mystics, maybe not). If our goal is to heal the earth and assure our survival, we need to get serious about our goals and how we will achieve them.

I have lost count of the number of spooky-type self-proclaimed Witches I have met who are wacked out of their skulls on delusions of egocentric deification. Come on, be real. These people destroy our credibility. They are a joke, and a potentially dangerous one.

Co-operation

The best analogy of the Pagan community that I can think of is that we are a bunch of squabbling hill tribes. I would not for a minute condone the idea of forming one great big religious body; our individuality is precious. But we need tighter coordination within and between groups. I have personally witnessed unbelievable levels of confusion and apathy at numerous gatherings and events. This shit has to stop! If we can't even pull off simple inter-community events, how can we ever expect to deal with the world governments and the mega-money witch-hating churches? Face it, if we can't organize and mobilize in response to complications that may arise when we have to deal with these organizations, we are dead.

In Conclusion: If we want to enjoy the same types of freedom and protection now enjoyed by the Xtians and Jews, we need to establish or empower a group of persons to deal with the governments (not to be governors of the population they represent; read that carefully and relax). Further more, these organizations should be full-time working organizations, unlike those that exist and claim to serve this function already, i.e. COG.

NOTE: the opinions expressed are MINE. If you don't like them, GREAT, write a letter to the editor. This will give us copy for next month. Complacency is Death; Thank You.

Brigit

The lovely and talented Ms. Brat

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The wit and wisdom of the outrageous Brigit Brat
reprinted from the Compost NewsLetter
Brigid 90
What to Talk About at New Age Parties

Gosh, I never knew how many multi-talented psychic / healer / astronomer / Quabalist / fluffballs were actually out there. Well, now I know: there are a lot.

"Hi, I'm _____ (insert some nauseating esoteric name -- oh, and of course give yourself a title), I'm a _____ (pick a vocation), (insert some metaphysical small talk); here is my card; my specialties include _____ (insert a string of incredible claims and talents)." (now offer your services and give them your price list.)

Topics for metaphysical small talk:

- Healing the planet with positivism (and inaction)
- Who I was in a past life
- Dolphins or Dolphin Camp
- Atlantean architecture, communication mediums, road maps, and other artifacts.
- The Goddess (Wicca is a taboo subject, however, too negative and nasty).
- Acupressuring your way to Enlightenment
- Whatever your last conversation with your spirit guides was about.

The Rainbow Chasing Smurf Worshippers have incorporated! OK, I've had it, I'm going to sell out while I still can.

Announcing: BRIGIT'S METAPHYSICAL BUSINESS CARDS, DESKTOP PUBLISHING, and SPIRITUAL BUSINESS CONSULTING.

Here's how I'm going to do it:

A simple training program to turn anyone into a highly marketable psychic phenomenon.

First: a Business Card

1. Your Name -- That shouldn't be too hard
2. Pick a title -- Oh come on, live a little
3. Put your address here
4. Pick a Holistic Type Border
5. Pick a Naturalistic Type Logo:
 - The Earth
 - A weird bunch of lines that a chimp drew
 - The Goddess
 - A tree
 - A bunny or something
 - A power animal (not a bunny)

Second: A Little Social Grooming

Learn to use these words: (I've defined them for you so it isn't too hard)

- Holistic - No defined meaning; make one up
- Metaphysical - Merchandising over matter and science
- Positivism - Mush over Matter
- Past life Regression - \$ 1500.00
- Channeling - their cash to you.

Read a few pages from ONE of the following books:

- Out on a Limb
- Out on a Limb
- Out on a Limb
- Out on a Limb
- Dianetics
- The Book of the Law [only if you want to appear DANGEROUS at the next party]

But just remember, dear reader, using these principles without paying for them will bring you bad karma. If you are afflicted by such bad karma however, please don't hesitate to call.

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The wit and wisdom of the outrageous Brigit Brat
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Eostre 90
Big Game Feminist Hunting

Gentle Reader, the following article concerns the increasingly popular sport of feminist hunting. This may offend many of you as it contains graphic references ...Wait a minute, I don't have any gentle readers, they're all sick scum who enjoy my psychotically disgusting view of the world around us. So fuck off all you reactionary twits. If you get offended, I get a rush.

We are talking with Tom, formerly with Mutual of Omaha's Wild Kingdom. Since the show's end, Tom has become one of the most sought-after hunting guides in the world. Tom frequently leads expeditions into Middle America to hunt for radical lesbian feminists.

"Tom, why hunt radical lesbian feminists?"

"Well, for one, the hunting has become necessary; what with most of their natural enemies on the decline, the population has exploded, they have gone off the endangered species list and become a public nuisance. In fact there are so many of

them now that if food becomes scarce during the harsh winter months many will simply starve. And of course the second reason is the sheer sport of it."

"Are there any dangers involved in this sport?"

Why yes, the typical feminist is a herd animal, so getting close to the prize specimen is quite a challenge. A charging herd is a frightening sight, since many of the specimens can exceed 400 pounds."

"Where do you hunt for radical lesbian feminists ?"

"Mostly around universities or anyplace which offers women's studies and has a steady supply of radical lesbians."

"What are you going to show us today?"

"Actually, today we are going to observe a new relocation program being established by the BCWM (Bored Citizens With Money). It is their intention to relocate a number of radical lesbian feminists to more remote areas where their population is less dense. Suggested release areas include Washington state, Utah, Tennessee, and North Dakota. I have offered my services as a tracker, so tag along; this should be an exciting afternoon."

We travel with Tom and the BCWM to a nearby university. There Tom surveys the area and looks for RLF spoor. It seems that Tom has found what he's looking for, and he's started to install the capture nets. Next he will need to bait the trap.

"Tom, what do you use for bait?"

"I've found that a truck covered with male chauvinist bumper-stickers works quite well. We will set the truck in the middle of the capture area and wait."

We don't have to wait long at all; in a few short minutes a pack of nearly twenty radical lesbian feminists has gathered around the truck. We fire the capture nets. Now is when Tom's work is really cut out for him; he must tranquilize and tag each individual as quickly as possible. A frightened radical lesbian feminist can easily injure itself in the nets. Tom uses an airgun with Thorazine; he's taking no chances and will not approach until the subjects are all sedated.

Tom is now fitting each RLF with a radio transmitter collar. After all of the necessary data is gathered at the site, the RLFs are put into transfer cages and flown to their new frontier home.

That's all for now; join again me next time for more Sick and Unusual Sports.....

Brigit

The lovely and talented Ms. Brat

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The wit and wisdom of the outrageous Brigit Brat
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Samhain 90
A Pagan View Of Death and the World We Live In

The Death Card in the Tarot

The Death card in the Tarot is perhaps the most misunderstood and most feared card to the first-time reader. The Death card in a reading very rarely, if ever, means physical death. The actual meaning of the card is that of radical change or transformation. This is the view of death held by most "primitive" cultures, that death is not a definitive end to one's existence and adventures, but merely a metamorphosis, a transition into another existence. Perhaps the reason humans fear death so much is because you can never be sure of what awaits you on the other side of that transitory experience.

Manipulation of this fear is the building block, the driving force, behind modern religions. The major selling point of such religions is that if you live your life according to their wishes, their will, and their doctrine, they will guarantee you the conditions that will exist for you on the other side of death. It's like buying a term life insurance policy from a company that has never had to pay a dividend. A good arrangement, if you are the church.

Burial Practices and Social Behavior

If you understand anything about physics, you understand that energy (or mass) can neither be created nor destroyed, merely changed in form. If the soul does exist, and it is comprised of some form of energy, then it stands to reason that this energy will not simply cease merely because the physical body no longer functions. Where does that energy go? I don't know; no one does. Cultures have long devised theories about what happens to the soul after the body reaches its end. "Primitive" cultures believe that it went back into the mother Earth to be reborn (hopefully into the same tribe among other familiar souls); these beliefs are reflected in the behaviors, attitudes and life-styles of these peoples, just as our current beliefs are reflected in ours.

Primitive peoples identified with the life-death-life cycles being exhibited all around them, the seasons changing and determining life: Spring, when life arose from the mother Earth; Summer, when the new growth became ripe; Autumn, when the life either was harvested or died only to return to the earth; and Winter, the Death-sleep season when all lay quiet under a blanket of snow, and when in fact new life was being created under the ground (in the belly of the mother/Imbolg.)

Modern peoples with their modern theology see existence as linear. You are born, you live, and you die. Then you are judged by some great Father image (conveniently removed from the Earth itself) who determines where you will spend the rest of an incomprehensible period of time called Eternity (big payoff at the end of the game, but only if you win.) Even our commonly-accepted burial practices reflect this linear vanity.

We humans like to think of ourselves as above all other living creatures, and, in fact, this rock that we happen to be using; so much so that we have removed ourselves from the food chain, the cycles of life and death within the Earth. Upon death, the body is preserved as if its former occupant plans to re-use it at some future date, and placed in a casket and perhaps even a cement vault. The food value of that person's body is lost to the Earth forever. It makes one wonder if the planet may, at some point, experience a sort of "chemical starvation" from being deprived of the nutrients it has been forced to invest in its human inhabitants for countless generations.

Death is an element which has been routed out of our daily existence. We have no more holidays for the dead in our culture such as Samhain (Halloween) was for the Europeans. We try not to think of death, and when the subject is addressed it makes the average person quite uncomfortable.

People in our society are not prepared for the eventuality of death. We are isolated from the experience itself. A person dies in a nursing home, totally removed from the family, and upon dying the body is whisked away to be prepared for the now-present relative. The body is drained and refilled with preservatives, dressed and made up, all to present the appearance that the loved one has not actually departed, but is merely sleeping. I feel that this facade actually makes it harder for the surviving friends and relatives to accept the reality that the person has died.

The Death Card Revisited

So, what do we know about death? Not very much. The only thing we can be certain of is that it will be like nothing you have ever experienced before. You may approach it with fear and dread, or armored with the heroin-sweet promise of a paradise/resting grounds; or as shown by the card Death, as a powerful transition into another form of existence.

Brigit

The lovely and talented Ms. Brat

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The wit and wisdom of the outrageous Brigit Brat
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Yule 90

Are you ready to accept JESUS as your personal pimp ?

Oh no, what is she off on this time?

Here it is: Somebody (mostly likely a paranoid Xtian wimp at work) sent me 3 J.T. Chick mini-pamphlets in the mail. I really love these things; my favorite is one entitled DARK DUNGEONS (dunt dunt dah). Here is a brief excerpt:

Witchy looking woman in black: "Debbie, your cleric has been raised to the 8th level. I think it's time that you learn how to really cast spells."

Debbie: "You mean you're going to teach me how to have the real power?"

Witchy looking woman in black: "Yes, you have the personality for it now."

This cracks me up!

More:

The intense occult training through Dungeons & Dragons qualifies Debbie to enter a witches'coven as a priestess.

Shit! And I waited a year and a day from dedication, read countless books and attended numerous rites. If only I had known all it would take to become a priest or priestess in this religion was play a stupid role-playing game....

In the back of another booklet there is a yes-or-no answer section asking if you have accepted Christ as your own personal savior (wasn't that a song by Depeche Mode? "Your own personal Pan Pizza"... Sorry; tangential expressions.) These zealots are telling you what you must do, what you must pray, and that you have to obey and follow the will of Christ as the lord of your life. They are not only politically incorrect but psychologically fucked up. Why, hangin's too good fer 'em, burnin's too good fer 'em, they should be cut in little pieces and buried alive!.... (oops -- a tad too indignant, my apologies.)

OK, let's really dive into the psyche of J.T. Chick (bring a flashlight). I've read his full-sized Xtian comics. Here is what I (with some help from numerous books on art and dream interpretation) find them to reveal about their creator J.T.Chick:

- The two heroes in these stories are well muscled adult males who are always shown undressing in hotel rooms as they travel around the country. Hmmmm.
- The author/artist is extremely fond of showing Christ on a stick with enough gore and pain to put Jason to shame. It is as if the idea of being a tortured martyr is appealing if not actually a turn-on...

I've got it! J.T. Chick is a repressed homosexual with an extreme bondage/S&M; fetish! Hell, if that's all it is... Hey, JTC, move out to San Francisco and we'll help you find a well-muscled gay man who will be happy to indulge your torture fantasies.

Oh well, I've already given this maladjusted little twit more attention than he deserves. J.T. Chick, You're Sick.

Praise the Lord and pass the KY Jelly.

Brigit

The lovely and talented Ms. Brat

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<http://www.wiggage.com/cnlfic/brat6.html>

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The wit and wisdom of the outrageous Brigit Brat
reprinted from the Compost NewsLetter
Litha 91
Kids

The phone rings.

It's 2 am Monday morning. Damn! I just got to sleep.

Hey Brigit, I decided to take you up on your offer.

Wha?? Who is this??

It's DJ.

Oh, shit. Wha, what happened? I turn on the light and slip into a bathrobe.

My dad beat me up so I split.

Fuck! Where are you now? I'm at Justin's.

You got a way up here?

Yeah, Lisa will bring me up.

OK, get here quick. I'll make a bed for you, we'll deal with it when you get up here.

DJ is 15 years old. His father is a rather large and violent man who works in a correctional facility, his mother is an alcoholic and from the description he gave of her I'd say she is extremely close to a condition called alcoholic hepatitis.

Bad memories kick in the adrenaline, so I get up to make a bed for my impending waif. I remember my dad grabbing my throat. I broke his grip and gave him a hip throw. He said, "When I get up, you better be gone!" I got on my bike and pedaled for my life. The fear hits my lower back as I spread the sheet out on the floor. Now where is that extra comforter? He was actually trying to run me over with the family station wagon. I escaped by riding into a cornfield. I stop myself before the fear paralyzes my sense of reality.

DJ arrives. He looks exhausted, scared, and is sporting a vertical welt on his right cheek. Throughout all of this he is trying to maintain the air of toughness so important to the adolescent male American (and doing a damn good job of it). He briefly tells me the events of the evening and I put him to bed.

An hour and a half afterward I drag myself out of bed and manage to make it to work.

My objective for today: find a shelter for DJ.

First call is to my therapist (Naomi O'Keefe -- she helps people get happy). Naomi tells me of the Huckleberry House in San Francisco.

I call H. House and inform them that I have inherited a 15-year-old battered runaway. The first thing they want to know is his zip code. WHAT !! He's a fuckin runaway! As in no fixed address. What a stupid thing to ask. (I didn't go off on the person; I have found that when one is requesting aid from a state funded agency politeness is required.) They tell me that since his parents live in San Jose, I should call a shelter in San Jose.

I call a group home.

"Is this your child?"

"No" I say.

"The parents have to have the kid admitted. Someone (usually the parents) have to pay."

Well, that's mighty damn helpful!

Same response at other group homes.

I even call a Christian work farm in Sacramento -- no shit, me, Witch with an attitude, about to feed a traumatized child to the Christians.

Children's rights -- they don't exist. If DJ had a drug problem or was in trouble with the law, the system is set up to handle him. But if a child simply realizes that his parents are not capable of being healthy parents, there isn't a damn thing that he can do, except run away.

At my home DJ entertains himself by playing in my music studio. Drum machines, guitars and computers -- everything a growing boy needs. He ODs on MTV and Showtime and gives my disk player the workout of its electronic life. This is his first taste of freedom and he's going to get as much as he can now! The future doesn't exist past future encounter with girls (he has an active scheming mind and an appearance that will probably allow him to get away with many a young girl's heart). The future never meant anything to me either. Life went as follows: you were born -- but you don't remember that. Daddy beats you and tells you you're shit and he's going to kill you one day, so you believe him. You lose connection with your body and lie awake at night wishing he would just get it over with and you could be free. Safety is in the blue-black zone of nonexistence found between dreams and psychosis. Pleasure is found by offering your body to anyone who will care to touch it. There is no future. Whatever immediate pleasure I could find, I immersed myself in (the making of a sex toy).

Over the course of the week, DJ begins to talk more about himself and his home life. He doesn't really need to tell me -- it's all too familiar. But I listen. It's what he needs. If there had been someone around who I felt could understand me at 16, I would have been able to see the world in a much different manner.

Trying to be responsible for another human is quite a task. Now not only do I have to remember to feed myself, I have to see to the feeding of one teenage boy (large quantities inhaled vigorously).

Though having DJ around is a large chore, it does have some interesting rewards. I get to see myself as I was 10 years ago; this time I can do something about it. Not to attempt to rescue or save him, mind you, but to simply relate my life to him and let him know that he is not alone in this. I tell him what it was like for me, how horrible my father was, how I reacted (the sexual and gender confusion, deliberate self harm, self-destructive passive-aggressive behavior). Then I tell him how I've been able to recover and actually build a decent life for myself. I see a faint glimmer of hope entering into DJ's personality.

For the first time in my life I start to have a strange feeling of some monumental personal achievement, as if I have reached a milestone in my life. And a seemingly elementary realization solidifies in my mind: My Life Matters.

Epilogue: If anyone knows of a set of foster parents or of any program that might be able to accept DJ without the intervention of his parents -- please let me know. I am seeking solutions working with the Santa Clara Department of Family Services. The best they say is for DJ to be placed in a foster home, or for me to become a licensed foster parent (I don't think that the state will be too hot on the idea of granting a foster parent license to a bisexual cross-dressing bondage fanatic).

Brigit

The lovely and talented Ms. Brat

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<http://www.wiggage.com/cnlfic/brat7.html>
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About this capture

The wit and wisdom of the outrageous Brigit Brat
reprinted from the Compost NewsLetter
kate moss is fat

"It was awful. I'm lucky to have escaped with my life," gasps Brigit Brat between sobs as she recounts the harrowing events of her recent past. "I received a phone call from Kelly Klein -- she said she was a big fan of my music and invited me over to the Klein ranch to have an Ultra Slimfast and some low fat cookies. I accepted. Kelly met me as I arrived and explained that her husband was away on business as she led me to the study."

The Slimfast was strawberry, my favorite. Kelly started to tell me about her fears for her husband's fashion kingdom. "Our analysis shows that the public is obsessed with ultra

thin, pretty, sweet, passive creatures as fashion icons. Each season we have to surpass our previous effort to present the ultimate perfected fashion. Eventually, of course, we will be up against the limits of human physiology."

"You should have considered modeling, Miss Brat," she said to me as I finished my Ultra Slimfast, "you do have the bone structure, not to mention an extremely long frame." I started to thank her and the room shrank to a tight keyhole in front of me; I felt my head hit the floor.

I awoke to find myself shackled to a cross in a dim basement dungeon. Through the darkness I could almost make out the forms of several other victims who were in a similar predicament. Many of these poor creatures were crying out for food.

The evil purpose of this dungeon became immediately apparent. This is how that little codependent bitch plans to supply her husband with supermodels.

Brainwashing: subjected to hours of Brooke Shields and Obsession commercials while a nonstop loudspeaker blares out "Food is Bad, Bones are Beautiful."

"Kate , Kate can you hear me?"

"She can't stand up, mistress, she's too weak."

"Fine ! then lay her across a couch. Her first shoot will be prone. As soon as she regains the ability to stand, I want her in swimwear."

I finally escape when I become so thin I slip through the restraints and out a cat door.

Recovery in an EDU... I can't even look at Slimfast....

Brigit

The lovely and talented Ms. Brat

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The wit and wisdom of the outrageous Brigit Brat
reprinted from the Compost NewsLetter

Lammas 1993: THE BRIGIT REPORT
Good Drug/Bad Drug

Bad Drug: After doing a talk show in Los Angeles, the host tech and myself were relating our various drug stories, when one of the techs asked if we would like to trip on this wonderful organic hallucinogen known as Datura. We said sure! We piled into his car and drove to a field, where he pulled out a machete and hacked up a lovely little bush with white flowers. He told us to make a tea of the non-waxy leaves. It smelled and tasted like canned spinach (which evoked horrible memories of my mean old gramma).

20 minutes later, we all felt slightly euphoric and then lost all motor skills. We all spent most of an hour trying to contain Kent, who was determined to walk (or should I say fall) about the cramped one-bedroom apartment. Suddenly things changed shape, and other people were in the room with us. At this point I realized I was hallucinating wildly.

What amazed me was how absolutely real these hallucinations appeared. Strange twisted space alien dolphin/eraserhead baby smiled at me with a look of omnipresent compassion. I spent an eternity looking at a fat old lady in pink Reeboks sprawled out on the futon, wondering "when did she get here?" When Scott and Felina walked in from the kitchen and looked at this apparition and then Felina turned to Scott and asked, "Do you think we should take Grams home now?" this set off all my alarms! My fellow trippers were responding to the same hallucinatory images as myself.

Datura is used by North and South American Native Americans as a dream/vision quest drug. My theory of its operation is something like this: The contents of your subconscious (dream brain) are suddenly 'ported over into your conscious (waking brain), and suddenly your dream world is alive in your living room. If that isn't enough, your subconscious is fully capable of linking with other subconscious brains (Jung's collective unconscious), so you have a compounded Third Dreamworld crowded with images you can't understand. But wait, it gets worse!

After several hours of nightmarish intruding hallucinations, we all blacked out and got up and went somewhere. I don't remember any of this, but my friends found me in the alley in fetal position, crying, and Kent busily petting an oil spot on the neighbor's driveway, thinking it was a friend who had been squashed by a steam roller. I woke up, grabbed Vylet, got into the car and drove to Tara and Jeremy's (I left Kent because I was still mad at him for stepping on my hair during his house exploration/wrecking phase of the trip). I was talking to Danielle and Robbie during the drive, and then I realized they were in San Francisco. This was 18 hours after we took the drug -- definitely the Energizer Bunny of the hallucinogenic world.

The full trip lasted between 18 to 28 hours with about a two-day period of seeing ghosts and hearing people's thoughts (completing their sentences and such). Recovery time was approximately 2 weeks. Bottom line: Absolutely the single worst experience of my life. Stay away from this drug; mushrooms and acid are much more fun. Warning: I was very fortunate to have only tried a small, weak portion of this herb. Too strong a dose produces heart failure at the end of an awful trip.

Good Drug

Estrogen: I'm not kidding; this has to be the perfect "Gothic" drug. Since I have been on estrogen I have experienced sudden fits of melancholy, weight loss, depression and a few radical mood swings. This is also a first-class excuse and defense when you want to vent at your asshole roommates. Believe it or not, you can actually score these off the black market. Be sure to get estrogen and not progesterone (which can be nasty to your cardiovascular system). I recommend to all males inclined to try this form of gender

travel that you start with a low dose (.625 mg. Premarin in pill form). A low dose such as this should not interfere with the normal operation of the male genitalia; a high dose of course will.

Warning: if you are going to do this, I recommend you be in good health, have a therapist to check your sanity dipstick, and be very patient with yourself. Many "girls" go completely mad from jacking themselves up on huge doses because they want tits RIGHT NOW! If having a female or She-male body is important to your sanity, it is best to attempt this transition in a slow methodical manner so you can keep your sanity for your new body.

The first four months are the hardest. You will be more susceptible to colds, and probably go through periods of short temper and occasional crying jags. Real girls are generally the best confidantes in situations such as these (they have been through it in their puberty and can sympathize). Any "manly men" in your life will be shit scared and sometimes openly offended that you are throwing away your manhood (you're not). Oftentimes these men will try to see you as less than a man and less than a woman. Don't let them -- that's their gender hangup, not yours.

End of Trance-mission report
Stardate 29 June 1993 1922pm
Wing Commander Brigit Brat
Starfleet Headquarters

[Brigit Brat, a seven-foot-tall blonde She-male dominatrix, also known as God's Girlfriend, may be familiar to longtime CNL readers. S/he has changed in a few unimportant ways, but is as lovable as ever.---vw]

Brigit

The lovely and talented Ms. Brat

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About this capture

The wit and wisdom of the outrageous Brigit Brat
reprinted from the Compost NewsLetter

Brigitte Steps Out
reprinted from the Compost NewsLetter
by Valerie Walker
CNL Samhain 1990

It's really all Ron's fault.

If he hadn't come home and asked if I wanted to go see Bobby the pastry chef perform in Shock Treatment, a drag show playing in Walnut Creek, I don't think any of this would have happened. But he did, and I said sure, fine, sounds like fun.... but Walnut Creek?

The club, Just Rewards, is in a business-park sort of area just off the highway; not the sort of location you'd expect to find much of anything. But it's an interesting place. On Sundays from 3 to 9 p.m. it's a lesbian country-western bar, and after nine it alternates between Shock Treatment and male strippers. The country dykes usually hang out for the drag/strip shows, so the audience is a mix of jeans-and-plaid, glitter-and-leather, and suit-and-tie. All very friendly, too. On our first visit, Ron and I meet a wonderful woman named Martha (jeans-and-plaid), generous with tips on the best time to get there, places to sit, and dancers to watch.

We perch precariously on a shelf as the show begins. Two performers blow us away: Cartoona Strip (Bobby) and Michael Angelo, the King of Drag. 'Toona is entirely unlike Bobby: where he's quiet and unassuming, she's an in-your-face, totally wild and athletic performer who leaps up on tables, in laps, all over the club, fast and furious; where he's a nice-looking guy who tends to fade into the woodwork, she's rampantly sexy. Her costumes tend to wander north as she gets energetic--one little number begins as a dress and ends as a crop-top. And wasn't that miniskirt an old Fifties-style girdle?

Michael Angelo, on the other hand, is a barrel-shaped, Mohawked example of total and complete gender-bending, with the most incredible costumes this side of Hollywood--all self-designed and -made. Neither of them take themselves as seriously as the Cher and Tina Turner knockoffs usually found in drag shows--and the audience loves them. Ron and I decide that BG MUST see this show and meet these people. BG agrees, and thinks this would be a nice time to come out in public drag.

So two weeks later, after hours of planning (costume, makeup, shoes, omigawd, SHOES!!!) and an extended glamour attack at our house (This belt or This one? The dog collar? the five-inch fuck-me pumps or the four-inch patents with the ankle straps? Earrings, omigawd, earrings! Hair up or hair down? Can I borrow an evening purse?) BGwobbles to his feet (a full seven foot five, what with the heels and the hair), reborn as --Brigitte!!!

It's a rainy night, and I'm glad Ron is driving -- no way could Brigitte manage in those shoes. She can barely walk. We get to the club early and grab a table right up front in the middle. Martha is there and hails us cheerfully with the news that everybody is planning to give Brigitte a special welcome, since it's her first time out in public.

The show starts. Cockatelia makes a passing reference to tall blondes, but it isn't until 'Toona comes on that Brigitte gets much attention from the stage. Too much attention, unfortunately. In whipping her leg around, 'Toona catches Brigitte a hefty Klongggg!! on the head with her knee. Brigitte is, to put it mildly, discomposed. "Ow, my neck. I think it's dislocated..."

A short intermission, during which I help Brigitte stagger to the bar and recover her poise. I point out that 'Toona treated her gently in comparison to the man at the fourth table back, whose head was nearly snapped off.

Another number, this one a duet by Michael Angelo and 'Toona to "The Homecoming Queen's Got a Gun," during which Michael Angelo as the Homecoming Queen, using a blow-dryer as a gun, interacts with the audience. (Actually, he thrusts it down Ron's throat, if you must know.)

At last, the finale: Nina Hagen's "Sunday School." Several performers enter the stage in white veils and robes. As the chorus begins, Michael Angelo, swathed in black, appears. He spreads his arms wide to reveal a lethal-looking black patent-leather bustier with huge pointy tits, studded with safety pins. He struts through the audience, menacing various victims with his massive enbonpoint, then back to the stage. Uh-oh... He's coming to our table. He's approaching Brigitte. He's grabbed her hair! He's got her by the hair and is burying her face in his bustier! He's mashing her face into the safety pins! Ow! She's bleeding! She's pissed off! She rises to her feet, grabs my hand, and yanks me along the hall to the ladies' room, where I attempt to stanch the blood with wet paper towels. Brigitte is incensed. To make matters worse, the ladies' room is visited by a parade of country dykes who seem to be taking the matter far too lightly. I mop away at the small gash in her forehead. The door opens, and Michael Angelo surges into the room, talking fast: "Oh hey I'm sorry man it was an accident you look TOADLY fabulous in that outfit would you like to sing a number with us sometime?"

Brigitte pulls herself to her full height. (I am trying to mop the blood while keeping a straight face, no easy task.) From all the dignity of seven foot five (including heels and hair), Brigitte says awfully, "my music is SERIOUS."

The rest of the evening is a blur for me. I recall trying simultaneously to bring Brigitte out of a Major Snit, keep Michael Angelo from flying into a retaliatory Major Snit, and stop laughing. (None of these attempts was successful.) I don't even remember the trip home.

But I can't say the evening was a loss. I had been witness to (and instigator of) an Historic Moment. Brigitte had been blooded (literally) and was well on her way into the ranks of Great Drag Queens. She has armed herself with a natty little black leather riding crop for defensive purposes. And Ron and I will dine out on this story for a long time to come.

Update: Michael Angelo has since died of AIDS, Shock Treatment disbanded, and I don't know what Bobby's up to these days; but Brigitte (now known as Brigit Brat, aka God's Girlfriend) is alive and kicking, recording and performing and living as a girl fulltime. She's taking estrogen and looks just like a giant version of Barbie....and she finally learned how to walk in those heels. Definitely a better woman than I am.

Brigit

The lovely and talented Ms. Brat

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Valerie Speaks Her Mind:

more than you ever wanted to know about everything from the WebMistress.

Contents:

- America's Weirdest Home Videos: Nuke some popcorn and pull up a cushion! The

Couch Potatoes Go Sofa-Surfing!

- A Field Guide to Modern Witches: grab your binoculars and your notebook, and let's observe them in their native habitat.
- Into The Woods: "In the midst of my life, I found myself in a dark wood..."
- Midlife: Crisis? Once again, Valerie is at least ten years ahead of the Baby Boomers. Here I worry about Cronehood. [Eleven years later, I realize it's really not that bad (in some ways), and much, much worse (in others).]
- Monsters From the Id: we all got 'em...
- Secrets of the Craft Revealed: Heavy Sarcasm.
- More on the W-Word: why I call myself a Witch.

....and, for mature readers: caution!

- Brigitte Steps Out: the Secret Origins of Brigit Brat.
- The Rant of JoMama: I dunno, it seemed to mean something at the time....
- Mistress Valerie's House of Pain: real B'n'D.

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moi
In full ritual drag and feeling my oats.

<http://www.compostcoven.org/cnl/lightbulb.html>
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About this capture

A collection of pagan lightbulb jokes
reprinted from the Compost NewsLetter

These jokes have been carefully hand-tooled by genuine Witches and handed down through the millennia as a precious part of our tradition...

- How many Witches does it take to change a light bulb?
Into what?

- How many Pagans...?

Six. One to change it, and five to sit around complaining that lightbulbs never burned out before those Christians came along.

- How many Garderians...?

1.) Sorry, that's a Third Degree secret.

2.) (in a low ominous tone) "Why do you want to know...initiate?"

- How many Alexandrians ...?

1.) Dunno - we haven't looked it up in the Gardnerian Book Of Shadows yet.

2.) Thirteen. One High Priestess to change the bulb, and twelve to hold her up under all that jewelry.

- How many Brit Trad Wiccans...?

Thirteen. One to change the bulb, and twelve to mourn the passing of the old bulb.

- How many Fam Trad Witches...?

1.) Candlelight was good enough for our ancestors, it's good enough for us!

2.) Go ask your own grandmother!

- How many Dianic Lesbian Witches ...

THAT'S NOT FUNNY!

- How many Thelemites ...

1.) Ninety-three.

2.) None -- real Thelemites aren't afraid of the dark.

- How many Druids...?

Five hundred and one. One to change the bulb and 500 to align the new stone.

- How many ADF Druids ...?

Six. One to change the bulb, one to write a song about how much better the old bulb was, and four to write conflicting parodies of the second Druid's song.

- How many Reclaiming witches ...?

(plaintively) "There are starving villages in Africa that don't even HAVE light bulbs..."

- How many Frost "School of Wicca" Witches...?

"Just you! That's right, YOU! And for only \$195 we'll send you our complete "Witches' Magic Power of Light Bulb Changing Course" with real knowledge that you can apply this to ANY light bulb ANYwhere! Listen to the testimony of a young couple from Wisconsin who..."

- How many Erisians ...?

"How many have we got?"

- How many Discordians ...?

Five Tons.

- How many Buckland Witches ...?

"Refer to my second book, Practical Light Bulb Changing by Raymond Buckland..."

- How many Tantrics ...?

Two, as long as the lamp is by the bed...

- How many Ceremonial magicians ...?

One. They hold it up, and the world revolves around them.

and (drumroll, please):

- How many solitary Witches does it take to change a light bulb?

(if they actually ask 'how many?', drum your fingers and stare at them as you wait for them to grasp the obvious)

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CNL: Stories

reprinted from the Compost NewsLetter

These stories and articles are for mature readers ONLY. You have been warned.

- Season's Greetings by Wyatt J. Bonikowski
- From Rocks to Riches by Richard Carter
- Our Little Secret Olga Moe
- Bringing Home the Beans excerpted from a satire by Seamus O'Bannion
- We Make Great Pets by Gradiva Scapular
- Test for Success!!! by Richard Steingesser
- Elvis Sings the Blues by Rand Warzeka
- An Arrested State of Decay by Danielle Willis
- Mice in Glass Coffins by Danielle Willis
- Artie, or I Wanted to Kill My Boss but His Brother Beat Me To It, or The Wheel of Karma, by Danielle Willis
- Hymn to Ninkasi (a beer goddess of ancient Sumeria) [translation from the original by M. Civil provided by Anchor Brewing Co. by courtesy of dan'l on CompuServe]
- Form 13-K Warlocking and Banishment (Provided as a public service by Songs of the Dayshift Foreman: Journal of a Rainforest Witch and the Pagan Security Commission)
- A puzzle How do you deal with a vampire when you've run out of Blood Donor cards?
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- The secret origins of Ms. Brigit Brat, God's Girlfriend

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About this capture

reprinted from the Compost NewsLetter

Lammas 1993:

Season's Greetings

by Wyatt J. Bonikowski

In the early morning hours, the dull green tree sagged under the weight of sparkling tinsel, heavy bobbles, shiny, sweet candy canes, and strings of multi-colored lights that danced on the scrawny limbs. Reflections of reds and greens played on the gray window pane, a display to entertain the vacant streets. Scattered needles carpeted the floor beneath, accompanied only by the splashes of smudged light that tripped along the floor. Outside the harsh wind blew. and the dangling decorations clinked together in the draft.

Somewhere in the silent house a door opened, creaked on its hinges. A young child shuffled from his bedroom, clothed in yellow pajamas, the stockings on his feet hanging over his toes. He stood at the top of the stairs, rubbing his eyes, and he looked down at the lonely tree. The small branches hung low, nearly touching the floor, and in the draft a red ball dropped to the carpet, rolling in a circle. The child had decorated it all by himself. He had found the tree discarded behind his house, and had dragged it through the snow and had set it up inside. He had pulled the cardboard boxes marked "X-mas" down from the attic and had hung all the decorations. In the bottom of one of the boxes he had found a small dough heart with the words "To Mommy and Daddy, with love" inscribed on the back. He had hung it on the tree, toward the center.

He had forgotten. How long ago had it been? Last night he had a dream. He saw a woman with beautiful eyes and a warm smile bend down, and she picked him up, holding him tightly. She had tears in her eyes. Over her shoulder, the young boy could see a man standing, eyes hardened against emotion, looking intently at the woman holding the child. The woman held him close to her, sobbing, saying "I'm sorry, honey, I'm sorry." And then the dream was over.

He did not know why he had dreamed that or who the man and woman were. He only knew that he had awakened with a word or two on the tip of his tongue.

The presents still had not come. For the past few days, ever since it had started to snow and he had set up the tree, he had come out of his room early in the morning and had looked down the stairs at the tree. He had been hoping to see gifts surrounding the base of the tree, stacked in mountainous heaps. But the tree had stood alone. The boy did not know why he thought there would be gifts; it just seemed natural, seemed to fit the equation: the snow plus the decorations plus gifts equaled...what? The word was just beyond his reach.

He started down the steps, being careful not to trip on the sagging toes of his stockings. He clung tightly to the banister with both hands, taking one step at a time, until he reached the bottom. Standing in front of the tree made him feel warm and happy inside. He felt safe and secure, knowing this was a time of peace and good cheer. In his mind the hint of a song played like a music box.

He remembered from long ago that the tree was to remain standing until the presents came. Without a tree there would be no presents. He hoped they would come.

In the early morning hours, birds twittered and chirped in the growing daylight. The snow had long since melted, giving way to a day filled with sunshine and cool breeze. The tree stood in the middle of the living room, its brown needles brittle and dry. Decorations hung from the sagging branches, and a string of red and green lights buzzed in their sockets. Discarded balls and broken candy canes littered the base of the tree along with a pile of splintered needles. Outside the cool breeze blew across the vacant street, and a draft stirred the fragile tree.

Somewhere in the silent house a door opened, creaked on its hinges. A young child shuffled from his bedroom, clothed in yellow pajamas, the oversized stockings on his feet dangling over his toes. He stood at the top of the stairs, rubbing his eyes, and looked down at the tree. The presents still had not arrived. Ever since the first week with no presents, his hopes had been slowly dying. Now he was not sure if the presents would ever come. Why did he think they would? He could not remember.

Last night he had a dream. The same woman from all his other dreams was there, but this time she sang a sweet song, a familiar song, a song that made him warm and happy inside. But standing at the top of the stairs, he could not remember the simple tune. He wished he could remember, but seeing the dead tree, he did not think it mattered any more.

He started down the steps, careful not to trip over his oversized stockings. When he was half-way down the stairs, he stopped. The lights on the tree looked strange, buzzing and blinking. He took a few more steps and heard a crack. One of the light bulbs had shattered, exposing its electric socket. The boy stepped down the remainder of stairs and walked over to the tree. Another light bulb shattered, and a spark caught a dead branch, and the tree ignited. The crackling blaze engulfed the tree, smothering it in yellow-orange heat.

The child stood staring in wonder at the blaze, the flames reflected in the pools of his eyes. He remembered this happening last year and knew that the season was over.

The tune from his dream popped into his head, and he began to hum quietly beneath the roar of the fire, smiling to himself. The woman's face kept appearing in his mind, and her name was on the tip of his tongue.

He hoped that next year the presents would come.

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<http://www.wiggage.com/cnlfic/secret.html>

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About this capture

CNL: Stories
reprinted from the Compost NewsLetter
Spring 1994:
Olga Moe
OUR LITTLE SECRET

The building looked exactly the same. Now, if it still had that identical lock for the laundry room, Nick would find shelter from the rain.

His fingers were sodden, pinching the old metal object he had carried in his wallet for the past two years. The key slipped into its keyhole. It was going to work. He shivered and pushed his way through the door.

It was dark, but he dare not pull that old familiar cord above the laundry sink and illuminate the naked bulb. Still quaking from the cold, he crawled along the floor and felt the wall. He found the latch. He turned the smooth, metal protrusion, and a rectangular door opened. Gratefully he stuffed himself through it.

Now, he reached for a piece of cardboard in his pocket, and he crammed it into the hole where the latch was supposed to go. Then, he closed the door.

It was warm in here. A furnace pumped out heat for the entire apartment building, just on the other side of the wall. It was completely dark. He had a flashlight with him, in his pack, but he was too tired to feel around for it right now.

He tucked the pack up under his head, trembling, and curled into a fetal position. Then he went to sleep.

When Nick opened his eyes again, he still saw nothing. But he was dry now, and warm. And he knew where he was. He was finally inside that silvery, insulation-lined storage crawl space in the laundry room.

He had always wondered what it would feel like to live in here. In all the five years he lived in this apartment building and did his laundry here, he had never actually crawled inside this little space. Of course, back in those days he had a job, and he lived in the apartment with the bay window, up on the third floor.

Last night Nick had walked over twenty miles in the rain to get to this laundry room. Now, he could smile. He felt like he had finally come home.

He clicked his flashlight on. Maybe with the small wad of soggy bills in his pocket he would be able to go out soon and get more batteries for it, along with some crackers and milk. He would get a paper, too. Maybe some kind of temporary labor job would be available.

He heard a noise. Someone was coming. He would have to wait in here until this person was done doing laundry, he supposed. He did not mind. He was happy just to have a private space like this where he could hide and stay warm.

Suddenly, there was a loud thud, a shriek, and then a clatter. Nick heard a groan. It sounded like a woman had slipped and fallen and needed help. He waited. She whimpered now, as though she could not get up.

Without thinking, he poked his head through the tiny trap door.

"Ma'am, are you all right?"

She jerked, and her aging eyes widened.

"Don't be afraid." He squeezed his body through the rest of the way. "Here. Need some help?"

He stood up, bent over her and lifted her back to her feet. "Did you hurt yourself?"

"Who.." she stammered. "Who..."

"I live in there. Just for awhile. No one was supposed to know, though. Just until I can find a job. You won't tell anyone, will you? Here. Sit down. On this chair." He led her over to a rusty vinyl and chrome chair in the corner.

"Please don't tell anyone. I won't make any trouble. I just can't afford any rent right now. Are you doing okay?"

"You don't have a home?" she said finally, out of breath.

"No. Just for awhile."

"And you live in there?"

"Just staying there. For awhile."

"Oh, you poor, poor boy. I would let you stay with my husband and me, but Dirk would

not hear of it. Oh, you poor boy."

"It's not so bad, really. I used to live here. I used to do my laundry in this room all the time. And that little door over there," He pointed to the tiny trap door, "I used to stare at it when I sat right where you are now, and I always told myself that if a person really got down and out, that little room in there would be a chance to start over. "

"What is it like in there?"

"Cozy. Nice. Especially when you've been walking around in the streets all tired in the rain."

The woman's face took on a look of enchantment. "Is it soft?"

"Sort of. It could be, I mean. I didn't really notice last night I was just so happy to be there."

"May I look inside?"

"Sure."

The woman limped over to the trap door and peered in. "No light?"

"Sure. I'll show you." Nick squeezed back inside the room and picked up his flashlight. "See?"

"That's wonderful!" she exclaimed.

"And you won't tell anyone?"

"Of course not. I'm proud of you for trying so hard to make a go of things like you are.." She leaned in to look once more. "My name is Mrs. Dench, by the way. What is yours?"

"Nick."

"Well, Nick, I think this is just wonderful."

Much later that evening, while Nick was reading the paper by flashlight and nibbling on crackers and an apple, he heard a timid knock.

"Nick?" It sounded like that Mrs. Dench lady, the one he met in the afternoon. He pushed open the tiny door.

"I brought you some things," Mrs. Dench said. "Look. Here's a cushion for you from the porch lounge, and here's a sleeping bag. And see? I brought you a little lamp. And a portable TV. They just run off this battery box here. You can charge up an extra one in

that cupboard over there. No one will be the wiser."

"Oh, Mrs. Dench. You didn't have to..."

"Fran, Dear. Call me Fran. Now don't be silly. And see? Here's a little plate of dinner I brought for you. Nothing much. You must be getting hungry. Spread the blanket out over the cushion, okay? And set up the TV. I want to be able to picture you in there."

Nick did as he was told. Then, when he propped himself up cross legged against a pillow with her plate of dinner held in his lap, she clasped her hands up to her chin and sighed. Her face was ecstatic.

"May I come in a minute, please?"

"Sure. It's kind of crowded, though."

She grunted slightly, squeezing her body through the door. Then, she wheezed and sat back to look around.

"Oh, Nick," she sighed. "I envy you. I wish I could live in this little room like you."

"Why?"

"Oh, because it's yours. No one can pick on you and tell you what to do. You're so lucky. "

She looked at her watch. "Oh, I guess I had better go. My husband will be wondering what happened to me. He's such a fuddy duddy, always keeping track of what I do. It's not because he really cares that much about me, you understand. It's just some kind of habit of his, like he's guarding his property." She sighed again. "It's really hard to break old habits when you get to be our age, the kids grown and gone, and all."

"I'm sorry Fran, if you're not happy."

"Oh, I'm happy." She pushed her body back out through the small rectangle. Then, her head popped back in. "I just wish I lived here like you, that's all."

She stood up to leave. "Well, good night, Nick. Good luck finding a job tomorrow. I hope you are more comfortable now."

"Good night, Fran," called Nick, softly. Thank you. I am."

He heard the heavy outer door of the laundry room close, and the footsteps of Mrs. Dench faded as they traipsed up the outside stairs.

Nice Lady, he thought, stretching out on his fluffy new bed.

The following evening, Nick heard another woman's voice outside his door. "Knock knock," it sang.

"Fran?" he called. "Is that you?"

"No. This is Blanche. Are you the guy that lives in the wall?"

Nick pushed open the door.

"Hi," the woman said, beaming. "Fran told me about you. She's my sister. This is really cute, could I look inside?" She poked her head through the door and surveyed the tiny, silvery space. "This is darling. Don't tell Fran, okay? She would be mad if I came to see you. It's always been that way, even when we were girls. She always had little secrets going on in her life that she wouldn't share with me. May I come inside?"

"Sure, I think."

The woman wriggled her body through the open rectangle, huffing, with her long earrings bobbing.

"There," she said finally. "Whew! Oh, I like it here. It must be so peaceful just to live like this."

"Well, it's really just temporary. . . "

"You ought to see what it's like living with a teenage daughter," Blanche went on. "Care if I smoke in here?"

"Uhh..."

"Oh, that's right. I didn't bring any with me anyway." She looked around. "Is that the TV Fran brought you? I could probably bring you a bigger one. Don't tell Fran, okay? She just wants to keep you to herself. She's older than me, you know. Her kids are all grown. My daughter and I live just down the hall from Fran. Sometimes, I wish I had a place like this just to get away from my daughter. Boy oh boy, it sure is peaceful in here. Any luck today finding a job?"

"I think they're hiring down at the fish cannery."

"Oh, boy you are lucky to be single and not have any kids. You just live in a wall, go out and find a job..." She shook her head and her earrings swayed. "Boy oh boy."

Nick slid up next to one corner, trying to find a place to stretch his legs.

"Well," Blanche said, abruptly.. "I guess I'll go. I brought you something." She reached

out through the opening and pulled in a paper sack. "Sweet rolls. I can bring you things too, you know. It's not like Fran has a monopoly."

Then, with a thrust, Blanche pushed herself through the door. "Good luck on that job tomorrow, Nick. And let's just keep this little visit to ourselves."

After the clamor of a few clumsy thuds, there was a retreat. And then there was silence.

It was another evening. Nick's body was sore from putting in a second day at the fish cannery. He tucked the sleeping bag up around his neck, turned on the tiny TV, and settled back to enjoy a comfortable stretch of time before going to sleep. Suddenly, he heard a knock on his door.

"Nick? Is your name Nick?"

This time, the voice sounded like it came from a very young woman.

"Yes."

"Can I come in and see your place? Please? I heard my mom talking about you to Aunt Fran."

Nick sighed, then slowly he pushed open the door. Crouching outside of the portal was a teenaged girl.

"Hi. My name is Kiki. Short for Katherine." Her long hair fell forward in her face.

"Wow. Cool!" she exclaimed, lunging through the door. "I'd give anything to have a little place like this. Then I could get away from my mother."

"I don't think this is a good idea..."

"You are so lucky! I can't believe it. I saw that little door a million times when I was doing the laundry. Why didn't I ever think of something like this? Are you gonna be staying here long? Can I have this room when you're done with it?"

"Sure, but..."

"Upstairs, my Mom's always saying do this, do that, don't do this, don't do that. " She blew out air. "And you get to just sit down here and watch TV. What are you watching?"

"I don't know, really. But I think I should be going to sleep pretty soon."

"Oh." She looked startled. "Oh. Okay. Sorry. I just had to see what this thing was all about. Aunt Fran told my mom, like it's a big secret, and I just had to come see. Don't tell her I came here, OK?"

She flipped her head and a ripple of hair slithered across her bony shoulder. "Well, here I go." Then, in one graceful undulation she was once again standing on the outside.

"Your place is really cool," she squeaked, ducking her face back in. "Well, don't tell my mom I know, Okay?"

"Okay."

She made barely a sound as she departed.

It had been another full day of work. Tomorrow, Nick would even get paid. There would not be much, but it would be a start. He felt satisfied and achy, very tired, as he curled up on his cushion and closed his eyes. He hoped that no one would come in to do laundry this evening. He did not want to be bothered by all that sloshing and clanking around. In a few minutes, he might even turn off the small lantern Fran had given him, curl up in this warmish, intimate region and go to sleep. Suddenly, there was an urgent banging on his door.

"Nick? Are you there?"

It sounded like Blanche's daughter, again.

"What's the matter?" he asked.

"Lemme in. Quick! I'm running away."

"You're what?"

She yanked open his door, slipped in and frantically clutched at it to pull it shut. Her face was blotched with tears, and swollen. "Doesn't this thing have a lock?"

"Kiki, wait. What's going on? This isn't right."

She flung her body against one corner of the chamber, folded her arms in front of her and stuck out her lower lip. "I'm never going out there again."

"Kiki, wait a minute. What happened? If they find you in here with me, they'll think I kidnapped you or something."

"Well I knew about this place before you did," she whined. "You don't have anything to do with it."

"You've got to leave. You've got to go talk to your mother."

"No."

Nick sighed. He started to gather a few things. Maybe he could find an extra bed at the Mission tonight, or something. At least tomorrow he would get paid. "Then I'm leaving," he said.

"Go ahead."

He grabbed his pack and started to crawl through the door, when a pair of rigid, denim-clad legs slammed up next to his face. He looked up. "You the dude who's been messin' with Kiki?"

Nick crawled back into his room.

"Come on out, Punk," the voice went on. "I know you got her in there right now. You come out or I'm comin' in. I'll cream your ass!"

Nick sat frozen to his spot.

"You comin' out, or am I comin' in?"

At that moment, someone else entered the laundry room.

"Rodney Treeker!" Blanche roared. "I told you to stay away from my daughter! What in the hell are you doing down here?"

"She ain't with me. She's with that dude in there."

"I am not!" Kiki squealed.

"You're wrong, Rodney," snapped Blanche. "She's in there just so she can get away from you!"

"I am not, Mother. I'm in here so I can get away from you! You never like any of my boyfriends. You're always telling me what to do."

"Katherine Jane Simpson, you come out of that place right now."

"No."

"If you don't come out this instant," threatened Blanche, "then I'm coming in. "

"Er, excuse me," said Nick. "I'll just get out of the way, here."

Cautiously, he crept out the door of his cubicle and on along the wall of the laundry room. He remembered he had seen a mouse do this once. Then, in a reckless leap, he jerked open the laundry room door and tore out into the open air.

He ran for a while, awkwardly, with his legs aching and his pack tottering around on his shoulders. Finally, he rested. He hid behind a tree. He looked back at the apartment house from which he had just fled. He saw Fran walking in the yard, heading toward the laundry room, carrying a pillow and a large plate of food.

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<http://www.wiggage.com/cnlfic/beans.html>

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[About this capture](#)

CNL: Stories
reprinted from the Compost NewsLetter
Spring 1994:
Bringing Home the Beans
excerpted from a satire by
Seamus O'Bannion

Bombay, and I'm doing my best to be inobtrusive in the bustling brown and saffron street under the blazing saffron sun, my head smothered in a blanket of cumin-smell and staccato babble and wobbly music, and a fat white hand latches onto my arm above the elbow -- fat grimy face half-hidden behind down-flipped widebrim hat and up-flipped, sweltering, winter-coat-black-collar, beads of sweat making long wiggly tracks down his blubbery cheeks.

"Whuh-h-h...!" I said, jumping out of my sneakers at the touch of that puffy hand. It was the Slimy European, and I scraped at where he grabbed me with my handkerchief.

"Whuh-h-h yourself." he said, his deep voice growling up from his guts on a gust of bad breath with a stink like decomposing meat and refried beans, his eyes open white holes that reach back and down, all the way to Calcutta, Marrakesh, Cairo, downtown Bayonne, and I had to turn away my face from those blank eyes.

"Wanna buy some beans?" he said, re-hooking me by the lapel of my shirt, his breath hot in my face.

"Beans?" I said.

"Beans," he said.

"What am I gonna do with beans?" I said. "I don't have a garden, not even a window-box or a geranium. Not even a pocket deep enough to fill with dirt. I'm just cruisin the world lookin for A Better Way."

"Got no 'magination's your trouble," he says. "These're magic beans, grow you a beanstalk from here to eternity, to coin a phrase. Climb the beanstalk and make your future, be a Lewis and Clark, a Junipero Serra, a Cecil Rhodes -- be the first Big Lanlord an Own Everythin."

"Sorry," I said. "Anyway, I'm broke. Took a vow of poverty. Even my cow is busted, and I'm stuck in this sweltering hell-hole till I can get it fixed."

He let go my lapel, I scrubbed at that too, and he latched onto the next passerby, a gorgeous young widow from New Jersey with black hair and fiery green eyes. She looked familiar. She was on her way with her toddler son to sell the family cow, a runny-nosed beast with skinny tits like old rubber gloves and big white-rimmed wild eyes like she knew it was all over and the hammer between the eyes was next and then the knife to cut her into tough bloody steaks and leathery chops. Dissolution after a lifetime of service. Protoplasm dissolving into other protoplasm, sucked down the endless black karma tube, corpse of dog turning into maggots and flies, then fungus and flowers and soil, spirit of dog flying in through your open summer door and getting in your eye, buzzing in your ear at night, pollen of oak trees gumming up your Porsche. And not even a gold watch for the old beast, to say nothing of a pension.

"Wanna buy some beans?" I heard him say .

"What am I gonna do with beans?" she said. "I don't even own a window-box or a geranium."

For whatever reason, she stopped and I listened to this guy while the kid played with the cow's tail, slowly winding it into a corkscrew then tying it in a series of tight little knots. Lively kid. Patient cow. I liked the cow right away.

While she talked, I picked up the kid, straddled the cow and took them for a ride around the block. I did it more for the cow than the kid. People followed us around with incense. Little girls walked in front of us strewing lotus petals. The gorgeous widow from New Jersey dickered with the Slimy European over the beans. "Can you throw in some pork fried rice?" she said.

After about forty trips around the block, she missed the cow, but she was cool and didn't break off negotiations till she got the beans for her price -- forty acres in Kansas, and she got to keep the cow.

"I didn't know you had forty acres in Kansas," I said as we flew the cow back over Central Europe. (They were nice enough to give me a lift back.) "I thought you said you didn't even own a window-box."

"I don't. That's what he paid me to take the beans. They bring good luck to whoever owns them and that's a great thing to have -- good luck."

"You're outa luck without it," I said.

She agreed. "It was thanks to the beans that he got the forty acres in the first place, he said. But he doesn't like farming, he said. Not since they got rid of the serfs. Slaves were nice for a while, he said, but then they got rid of that too, so now he's getting out of farming. He said it just isn't fun anymore."

"It figures," I said. "I never liked that guy. He's like the freeloader of all time."

"You know him?"

"Slimy? Oh sure. We go back a long way. I bought a used car from him once in the forties. It fell apart. Then he got into politics." I could see she was impressed.

It was slow-going flying her cow, but they couldn't fix mine for lack of parts, which they could have flown in from a bio-tech center in Detroit, except they were cheaper from the People's Republic. But the People's Republic was back-ordered, what with the whole Free World out looking for bargains, so I had to wait. I was really pissed. Every couple hundred miles we had to land so Bessy could graze. At this rate it would take forever to get back to Kansas. And I wondered what her top speed was gonna be on seaweed.

"So what's your name, sugarplum?" I said, being a man-of-the-world and a smooth operator.

"Later," she said.

"Why can't you tell me now?" I said.

"That's my name -- Later Carson-Caruthers. In my other life I used to be Little Annie Mooney, nee Francine..."

So that's where I knew her from! Little Annie Mooney, nee Francine, from the Wayward Bus Diner, then waitress in Spiro Poppapesto's greasy spoon!

"I was famous for my huge tits and rotten attitude. But it got boring not having a job, so I made a change: I married the famous adventurer and international financier, Captain Carson-Caruthers, who was hot for my body and thought I was a very interesting person. It's what I really liked about him the most besides his money -- that he didn't think I was crazy, just another very interesting person. Then I had Little Jack, and Captain -- that wasn't his rank, it was his name, he was really a major -- lost all his money when the country he lent it to went bankrupt. They were so corrupt! I never thought a country could be that way. They took all the money and bought tanks and guns and planes, and then they filed for chapter eleven. Or ward six. Or whatever countries file to go bankrupt. Don't you think that sucks?...Anyway, after Major Captain died (he shot himself twice in the head with a shotgun in the cherry orchard), I knew I had to change my life, so I had breast reduction and renamed myself Later. In the beginning, he said I was his chosen, his beloved, his little shnookee-poo and he made me a promise that I would never be poor again, but then he broke it when he died."

"Why didn't you rename yourself right away?"

"Because Later was shorter, I thought, than Right Away. You know? Names are important. I mean, just think -- if we didn't have names for things we couldn't talk about them. If your neighbor was having an affair with some guy down the block, how could

you talk about it if they didn't have any names?"

"You're very philosophical," I said. "Perceptive. We have a lot in common. Wanna have sex?"

"Well, right now I have Little Jack to think about. He's a very special little boy. I know he's going to do Great Things. I can feel it.." (I pressed a little closer) "After Captain died, I devoted myself to Little Jack and trying to set a good example. I mean, trying to raise a little boy without a father is, psychologically and sociologically speaking, a very difficult task -- to say nothing of anthropology, political science, economics, world history and calculus -- without bringing a lot of sex into it. Or even a little sex. It's very important for me to be a proper mother."

Boy, had she changed!

"Really the only thing I've done for myself since Captain died was breast reduction surgery. I used to be awfully top-heavy when I was Annie Mooney, and it got embarrassing having these great big sex toys jiggling and bouncing and walking into a room ahead of me all the time."

"Sex toys?"

"My boobs."

"Interesting perspective."

"Right now, I've been going around the world looking for Mr. Right. He has to be dependable but devil-may-care, handsome but not narcissistic, punctual but not neurotic, high self-esteem but not self-centered, conservative but not afraid of taking risks, financially independent but not obsessed with money, love his career but not a slave to his job, sensitive but not a wimp, honest-and-open but tactful, courageous without being belligerent, diplomatic but genuine, charming but frank, strong-willed but open to suggestion, but most of all, a man of conviction and extremely intelligent."

"Extremely intelligent?"

"He has to agree with me."

"Oh....I guess that makes sense. Anything else?"

"He has to be hung like a horse."

"Oh, I see," I said, brightening.

"What's your name?" she said.

"Right," I said. "Reggie Right. Most people just call me Mr. Right, though. Or sometimes they just call me Horse for reasons I hope you'll let me make clear."

"Mr. Right! Oh, wow!" she said. "I knew if I kept on looking, I'd finally find you! My search is over -- take me!"

Obviously, she didn't realize I was lying and that I was a traveling man, rooted only in the Eternal Verities: Love, Truth, Justice, and an occasional grilled-cheese sandwich.

On a lovely little meadow in Portugal, in view of snow-capped mountains under a periwinkle blue sky, while Bessy grazed and Little Jack pelted her lovingly with jagged stones, Little Annie Mooney Later Carson-Caruthers and I jumped greedily at each other, peeling away layer after layer of wool, cotton, polyester, leather, vinyl, rubber, hemp, glass, weather-stripping, brass trim, decorative brass studs and cold-rolled steel -- stripping away ages, centuries, aeons of civilization and getting down -- finally! -- to skin and sweat and jungles of hippie hair.

"Annie!" I cried. "Don't you remember me? Horse O'Grady from Poppapesto's greasy spoon in Englewood New Jersey?"

"Horse O'Grady!" she cried, memory vaulting with angel wings back to those tender, adolescent years of critically necessary experimental sex! "I knew you looked familiar!...Careful with that thing."

"I love you, Later!" I cried in triumph.

"Oh, love me NOW!" she cried back. And then, breathless under the blazing saffron sun, she cried: "Oh Horse! Horse! Horse! Horse...!"

Obedient to her call, I came with a snort.

"Oh Horse, I feel as though I've been a hundred years in solitude! I guess I really needed that."

"Glad I could be of service," I said. In the grip of conjugal love, I remembered when we were just two adolescents in a time of indifference, playing it cool, pretending not to care, no matter how much we really did. I thought about our gang, the group of older guys, all the deception and self-deception in those ancient times. There was a certain smile on Annie's face, and it made me feel good about my life as a man (and about love in the afternoon).

It was there, in that little green meadow, that she told me the story of her sad life, of her marriage to the ill-fated adventurer Major Captain Carson-Caruthers, and the strange prophesies surrounding her innocent, good-hearted little boy, Jack.

Jack....Jack....Why did this kid's name sound so familiar?

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<http://www.wiggage.com/cnlfic/pets.html>
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About this capture

CNL: Stories
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Winter 1993-94:
We Make Great Pets
by Gradiva Scapular

Hey. Let's talk about YOUR MESSY PET. I'm sure we've all had one, or been one. As in: BOOZE. JUICE!! INTOXICANTS!!! Ya know, the Night of Pan, God-Dog it! Just gettin ALL funky up y'all... the Animal Mask, hooked into the face...

Americans may truly be the lab rats of the Elder Gods, especially in the alcoholic arena. Yet, despite the damage these blundering, shambling animals cause, we PERSIST.

Maybe we're not just lab rats, but unruly, lovable PETS... a little fond indulgence from unnameable THINGS out there (in there?) allowing us to live to barf another day. I've

lived with nonhuman "pets" before, but only another human can (regularly) push the limits of your sanity past the edge, completely wreck the joint, and then plaintively quaver "Do you like me?" the next morning. Ya gotta love em. No, I'm not not talking about small children, or Irish Setters: I mean your Good Thang. Of course, you always hear stories that TOP your pet's and extend your forgiveness...

After all, "my husband Fang" (as the great Phyllis Diller called hers) never did drink a bottle of DISH SOAP (thinking it was Jack Daniels) & throw up in the kitchen sink. (I guess this guy also apparently used to brush his teeth with Comet, thinking it'd make his teeth whiter; they turned a wonderfully transparent GRAY.)

I've been a "pet", in the way a woman can still be a pet sometimes. Knocking other women off barstools; mutely accepting jewelry, dicks up the ass, champagne, crayon drawings, guilt-racked tales of Vietnam, the camera's eye. Smiling and thinking: I will leave soon. Sitting locked in a car in Georgia (eighteen, terrified), ostentatiously picking my nails with a blade while he goes to score... But, at last, I am loved; now I LOVE. I've found my bright-eyed beast.

But my dear friend is, indeed, a plaything of the merciless Ones at times. I've come home to find him dancing maniacally to moronic house music, wrapped in nothing but a torn Pink Floyd poster taped to his sweet ass with silver duct tape. The Star of Chaos is stuck to his forehead; his grin beatific and Stimp-y-like...

On calmer nights he may take a bath with all his clothes on (soggy cigarettes and pieces of paper emerging from pockets). Or listen to Madonna's "Deeper & Deeper" 900 times at earsplitting volume. Or simply bring a large chunk of pavement home and drop it on the floor like a prize. My good doggie.

Then there are those nights in the grip of alien claws, an emotional abyss I can't locate. "Even a man who is pure of heart, and says his prayers by night..." BELIEVE IT. Werewolves exist.

It's all in innocence at first, a magazine pic of Isabella Rossellini spiked on his dick (like a memo on a holder). He's joyfully slurring along with Sammy Davis Jr.'s ludicrous version of the "Shaft Theme". At some point, the religious impulse strikes, and the broken plaster statue of St. Lazarus is reverently brought up from the orixa altar in the basement (our Cuban landlord's)...UH-OH. "...a shot for my friend Laz, here! 'Laz is the man...can-you-dig-it!' " Well, shut your mouth. But it's too late.

And the room CHANGES; the Lord of Flies, Babaluaye', comes roaring in to the call of his child's goofy song. The booze-fired brain infected with an ancient gibbering paranoia...wind of pestilence... So "Fang" valiantly attempts to handle it with his own spontaneous ritual, but ends up getting a caulk-like mix of ink, blood, and Liquid Paper all over his hands, feet, hair, and the carpet...And the Father of Plagues sends icy paralytic driveling awe "he's so OLD..."

At which point I give up & barricade myself in the bedroom. When I wake up, there's a huge swastika scrawled on our wall, and his red eyes imploring: "Do you like me?"

You bet I do, baby. It's not ONLY our fault, anyway. As I dip the roller in the paint, he sleeps, finally, like a child. We're just pets: kick us and we yelp; love us and we give it all, even unto the last drop. It's the darndest thing, but there it is.

[Gradiva Scapular came up in & rules Chicago; she lives with a werewolf & he is SO FINE. The Sammy version of "Shaft Theme" can be found on Rhino Records' "Golden Throats: Part Two" compilation.]

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<http://www.wiggage.com/cnlfic/elvis.html>

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CNL: Stories

reprinted from the Compost NewsLetter

Spring 1994:

Elvis Sings the Blues

by Rand Warzeka

First Sergeant Carlos Garcia was one tough Marine. The bulk of his muscular body was shaped like an upside-down pyramid with a perfectly round cantaloupe sitting directly on top. He wore no ears and a nose so small he needed a rigged-up rubber band around his shaved head to hold a pair of aviator glasses across his deep set Neanderthal eyes. The most prominent feature on his tanned, pitted face was his protruding chin. It stuck out several inches from his small mouth and moved slowly from side to side while chewing gum.

Enlisting himself into the Corps at 17, he had served as rifleman and sniper at the height of the Vietnam War. It was while mortar fire hit his squad that Sergeant Garcia was shot in the head. Today, he still carries a .32-caliber bullet embedded in the portion of his left brain controlling speech and lip movements, causing a persistent lisp with words beginning with "S".

His most serious wound happened three years after the war during a parachute exercise over Camp Pendleton, California. As jumpmaster, he was the last to leave the C-130 aircraft at a height of 1600 feet. His chute opened late, leaving the sergeant dangling in a tangle of high tension wires less than forty feet above ground. A strong wind whipped him back and forth until the heel of his highly polished left boot touched a live wire several yards away.

"I felt the shock of a hundred goddamn devils," he told the base newspaper. "Everything turned bright flaming orange and thunderbolts seemed to drive right through me," he recalled in the base hospital. It took his left leg clean off below the knee.

The Marine Corps was proud he didn't try and wriggle out of his enlistment by making his disability look as bad as possible, as others might have been tempted to do. So proud that they promoted First Sergeant Carlos Garcia, son of two seasonal Napa Valley grape pickers, to Marine Recruiter Garcia. With his family and heart stateside, the Corps placed him in one of Honolulu's concrete strip malls on Kapiolani Boulevard. There he attempted to meet his monthly quota of marine skinheads.

His recruitment office was a cold steel-hard place with three solid cinderblock walls connected by a large front picture window with a bright red flashing neon sign that said: WE'RE LOOKING FOR A FEW GOOD MEN. One recruiting poster of a helmeted marine was placed exactly in the center of each wall. There was not a speck of dust on any of the three pieces of furniture within that room, the desk and two marine-issue olive drab swivel chairs. It was there Sergeant Garcia first met Elvis Presley.

"You're Elvith Prethley, that right?" Sergeant Garcia growled in a deep base falsetto sounding more of a command than a question.

"Yes, sir!".the man who said he was Elvis yelled back, shooting straight up from his swivel chair and saluting even though he didn't have to.

"There's no need for any of that. Pleath thit down."

Elvis did.

"Now then, you want to be enlithed as thoon as pothible." lisped the sergeant.

"Uh, yes, sir. Thankyou ... Thankyouverymuch."

Sergeant Garcia barely kept a straight face while the man claiming to be Elvis duck-walked over to the water cooler and drew a paper cup full of tepid spring water.

The man stood nearly six foot tall next to the cooler and wore large plastic-framed sunglasses and an untidy ducktail curling around his eyes and hanging down over his forehead. He wore a silver-studded black leather motorcycle jacket over a pink sequined silk shirt. Below his wide silver buckled belt were fringed bell bottom trousers. On his feet, white patent leather platform boots with three inch Cuban heels.

"You're too old to be a Marine recruit, Mr. Prethley." Sergeant Garcia tapped his olive drab marine-issue pencil rapidly on his desk and chewed his Juicy Fruit gum frantically with his protruding marine-issue jaw until it snapped and popped on every other chew. He tried remembering Elvis as he had seen him on his mother's old LP record albums. Elvis was thinner then, and certainly had narrower hips. Now, his body seemed to be one rectangular block of vertical flab.

"It's the other way around, Sarge. I, uh, I'm here to recruit you."

"For what?" the sergeant sputtered.

"For peace." And with that, the paunchy piglet-faced man jumped up on Sergeant Garcia's desk and marched in place where there were no stacked manila folders. He sang, "I've got those hup, two, three, four, occupation G.I. Blues," in time with his air guitaring.

Suddenly, Sergeant Garcia stood up, his face purple with rage and understandable befuddlement. "Get your lard-ath carcath offa my dethk, jughead!" the sergeant lisped.

Elvis kept singing, and marching in place, air guitaring and smiling as he did it.

Seeing that words were not going to make the man stop, Sergeant Garcia lifted up the bottom of his uniform trouser and removed his wooden left leg. Whirling it wildly overhead he screamed the additional lyrics to G.I. Blues: "From my G. 1. hair to my G. 1. shoeth!" before whacking the man who claimed to be Elvis squarely on the side of his ducktailed head.

It took several of Honolulu's "finest" to drag Sergeant Garcia from his cinder blocked recruiter's office that hot July day with his broken wooden leg clutched tightly in both hands and screaming the remaining stanza of G I. Blues from the top of his well disciplined marine lungs. "And if I don't go thtatethide thoon, I'm gonna blow my futhe!" He didn't of course; after a few weeks stateside with his family the sergeant returned to Kapiolani Boulevard and continued turning out marine skinheads.

As for Elvis, he did join the military after all, and is sighted every Christmas duck-walking and clinking his Salvation Army-issue bell outside Ala Moana Shopping Center. And while the coins are tossed into his kettle he yells out, "Uh, thankyou ... thankyouverymuch", smiling as he does it.

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Lammas 1992:

An Arrested State of Decay

by Danielle Willis

"There's nothin' on the radio when you're dead

There's nothin' at the movie show when you're dead

There's nowhere left for you to go when you're dead"

-- The Cramps, "Surfin' Dead"

Jenny's coming down with the Rot, her face mottled green and black, stomach swollen up like a greasy balloon. Reg has been injecting himself with embalming fluid he stole from the hospital, but all it does is make him nauseous and irritable and he's running out of it anyway. I wish he'd fucking get over it -- everyone starts to decompose sooner or later and it's not like life gets any better the second time around so what's the big deal? The only thing I freak out about is what it's going to be like when my brain starts to go bad -- I keep dreaming about fungus growing up the length of my spinal cord into the base of my skull and waking up sick with the stench of vegetation in my nostrils. I hope I'll have the guts to just douse myself with gasoline when it starts to happen. That's what Reg and Peter want to do to Jenny only they haven't been able to catch her and I won't help them because there's no way I'm going to risk major physical trauma trying to drag her out of that filthy hole she dug for herself under the rusting '72 Buick.

It's not like she's bothering anyone -- I mean, she comes up once or twice a day to pick around for carrion and that's it. I say just leave her alone, she won't last more than a week in this heat anyway. Reg says I'm helping to prolong her misery but fuck him, he's just a walking corpse like the rest of us even if he does have a degree from Stanford. It's his karma for being such a pompous asshole that he's living in a garbage dump with a bunch of fucking zombies.

Reg gets really pissed when I use that term because it's not scientific. He refers to our condition as being in "an arrested state of decay", which as far as I'm concerned is just a pretentious way of saying zombie. All I know is that one minute I'm lying in the bathtub pleasantly bleeding to death after five years of being too chickenshit to do anything but call my friends at four in the morning and threaten and the next thing I know I'm sitting up on a table at the morgue with a tag on my big toe that says Suicide. You know your life sucks when you finally get up the courage to kill yourself the very week people stop staying dead.

The papers are saying it's either a chemical spill or germ warfare, the Christians are saying it's the Apocalypse and Reg says it's "an arrested state of decay." I personally don't give a shit, but Reg and Peter are always conducting these sick annoying experiments "in order to better understand the nature of this aberrant biological phenomenon." At least that's why Reg does them. Peter does them for fun. Right now they're in the middle of a charming little game Peter calls Weebles Wobble But They Don't Fall Down, which is when Reg and Peter go crashing through the trash heaps hunting for rats, which they then kill and observe how long it takes them to resurrect. Then they kill them again and keep on killing them until they get bored and let

whatever's left of the poor creatures crawl away.

I usually take refuge in my Frigidaire during these festivities but today I don't feel like moving so I just sit there and watch while Peter hauls a rat out from under some soggy cardboard boxes and dashes its brains out against the hood of the Buick. After about twenty minutes it starts flopping around and Reg, mistaking my apathy for scientific curiosity, asks me to "note how reanimation occurs even in cases where the central nervous system has been severely damaged or destroyed." I tell him to get a life and go eat people at shopping malls and he stalks away in disgust. Peter staggers after him moaning "They're coming to get you, Baaarr-bra."

Danielle

Danielle Willis

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<http://www.wiggage.com/images/VEE-DECKjpgs/north.html>

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About this capture

North/Earth:

We are the powers of Earth, the ancestors. You carry our faces in your cells' memories, deeper than conscious thought can go. Your hands are our hands made young again. We watch silently from your past, and we help determine your future from the silence of our graves.

DESTINY

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<http://www.wiggage.com/cnlfic/rocks.html>

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About this capture

CNL: Stories

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Samhain 1992:

From Rocks to Riches

by Richard Carter

When I walked back into my cell after taking a shower, I heard a rustling sound in my locker. I thought for sure it was a rat. Lord knows there are enough of them in here, both the two- and four-legged varieties. But wait, I'm getting ahead of myself, this story really started this morning.

I had been sick for two weeks, and I had only left my cell in order to go to work. We were working six-day weeks, and the past two Sundays when I was off, I had slept all day. This morning, however, I must have felt better because at 7:30 AM I was wide awake and headed for the exercise yard.

When I got to the yard, the first thing I noticed was that during my two weeks' absence some construction had been going on. They had done some excavation and poured a concrete slab in order to enlarge the weight lifting area. The second thing I noticed was

the pile of dirt and rocks that had been dug out in order to pour the slab. "All right!", I thought to myself, "Rocks!" I began to casually kick through the dirt and look for rocks.

Now I must explain. You see, I have an affinity for rocks. I have managed to scrounge and hold onto a few of them, and in here, you get your comfort where you can. So I carry seven small stones with me, but I'm always on the lookout to expand my collection, which is hard in here, to say the least, what with all the concrete and steel.

Anyway, I began to look for rocks. I scraped away some dirt, and there it was. It was the size of a small hen's egg, but more octagonal. That's the first thing I noticed, how geometrically perfect it seemed, though it was obviously a natural formation. I bent to pick it up, and it felt very strange in my hand, almost warm somehow. It had a bumpy, irregular surface and a smooth, leathery feel to it. It seemed very heavy for its size.

I was grinning like an idiot when one of the guards came along.

"Hey you, keep moving."

"Yes sir," I said as I palmed my new find.

I went back to the cellblock, and into my cell. I sat on my bunk and held the rock, rubbing it. It seemed somehow alive, almost as if it had a pulse. I thought to myself "Time is finally getting to you man, ease up." So I put the rock in my locker and went to take a shower. When I got back from the shower, I was drying off and I heard it. Rustle, rustle, rustle. I stopped and listened: nothing. I started getting dressed. There it was again: rustle, rustle, rustle. Coming from my locker; a rat no doubt. I grabbed my size 11 steel-toed boot and opened my locker door very slowly.

The first thing I saw was my new rock. It was cracked and split in three pieces. The noise had stopped. I bent down and peered inside my locker, and way back in the dark I saw a pair of eyes shimmering, shining like eyes I had never seen before.

I inhaled sharply and said "Man!"

"Man!" came a tiny little voice from inside the locker.

Then the voice laughed, a small little gleeful, perfect laugh coming from inside my locker!

I thought "Well, this is it, I've finally flipped all the way out."

Then the rustle, rustle, rustle sound. And she came into view.

There she was. The tiniest, most perfect creature I had ever seen. Her eyes were grey where ours are white and the irises were a golden yellow. Her pupils were shaped like fingernail parings, and the brightest red I had ever seen. The rustling sound I had heard

were her wings. Tiny, spiny, gossamer wings. Miniature bat wings of the finest silk. She fluttered them at me and laughed again.

I was astounded. A dragon. A real, live dragon was in my locker.

Now, I have always supported the dragon myth. In fact, I have a dragon tattooed over most of my back. I had often daydreamed of dragons coming and letting me climb on their backs and fly away to some far off mystical land. But here I was, in federal prison, with the cutest little baby girl dragon ever to walk or fly the earth.

She was an iridescent blue and green along her back, and a creamy butter-colored yellow on her belly. She sat on her haunches with her perfect little feet sticking out and her short little arms and hands waving in the air. She pushed a box of raisins to the edge of the locker shelf, then looked at me and kind of shrugged. I opened them and shook some out in my hand and offered them to her. She daintily picked them up one at a time, two bites for each raisin. She ate twelve of them, then she gave a little belch, looked up at me and smiled.

She began to beat her little wings. They were so lightweight and small for her body, I would never have imagined she could fly, but she did. She flew right up and landed on my shoulder. She just sat there playing with my hair. She made happy cooing sounds, like any satisfied baby creature does.

As I lay on my bunk that night, my new little baby dragon curled on my pillow where I could feel little puffs of dragon breath, sweet as daisies, against my face. I can almost swear, just as I drifted off to sleep, I heard her say "Papa" and giggle ever so softly.

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CNL: Stories
reprinted from the Compost NewsLetter
TEST FOR SUCCESS !!!
by Richard Steingesser

The rate of illiteracy and disgusting innumeracy is OUT OF CONTROL in our beloved white America. So we at the GENETIC CENTER have deemed it necessary to issue THE TEST FOR SUCCESS. This test will aid and comfort concerned and socially useful parents of Caucasoid pre-kindergarteners by accurately grading brilliant child's intelligence and predicting their probable future at Yale University, at least if the Mercedes Benz family wagon isn't totalled this weekend.

Moreover, we at the GENETIC CENTER are allowing your child to take this test in the privacy of your own secure million-dollar home mansion, but this test MUST NOT BE MISUSED. No child (except third-generation Yale offspring) can take more than five minutes and ten seconds for Part I, or more than thirty-two nanoseconds for Part II --otherwise test scores are invalid, and your child will immediately disappear. Good luck!!!

PART I -- History and Humanities (Five Minutes and Ten Seconds)

1. In a colonial army of two fewer than ten thousand midgets, who is the commanding white officer?
A. the nawab B. the satrap C. the bey D. the nabob
2. If a man with a diamond baton throws a gilded throne at you, the proper response is:
A. Whaa? B. Really? C. Really? D. Nu?
3. If you are managing a satanic heavy-metal band, superbly positioned between Ozzy Osborne and The Tubes, which of the following power names would you choose?
A. Drexel B. Rosa Luxemburg C. Thor D. Susan Sontag
4. Describe in 150,000 words or more how Woody Allen molested you behind your parents' pink gazebo.

5. A palinode is a
A. designer drug B. a pail with a nose C. a gecko's left nostril D. a Charlton Heston etude
6. Which of the following groups -- some elementary set theory is required in this humanistical questionnal -- consists of the most dentists?
A. a few Peskins B. some Fishbeins C. most Motzs D. all Wongs
7. Using kinship terminology and anthropological formalism, explain your father's mother's father's genealogical relationship to the House of Kent. You may use photogravure diagrams if embossed in gold.
8. Which of the following words does this sentence suggest?
A. love B. retells life C. adored opus D. tip-toe
9. What was the dumbest thing ever seen by a human being?
A. a stranded baleen whale in L.L. Bean B. Lorne Greene C. a complete Brio set for \$14,999 D. the ortolah bird
10. The Yale College Admission Office would be most impressed by your exhaustive collection of?
A. aphids B. genital warts C. antique toilet seats D. Bic pens signed by Lorne Greene
11. You have a new Plantation walking horse and must name him. You would choose the appropriate name
A. Otto von Von B. Palestrina C. Bonzo D. Lorne Greene
12. You are about to be presented to the Queen of England, you would immediately change your name to?
A. Colville B. Longford C. Rusfus King D. Townsend
13. Your parents are vacationing in their Nantucket post-modern 18,000 sq./ft. log cabin and you and several thousand drunken friends must trash and destroy the family mansion. You would first destroy
A. the master bedroom and bath B. the bonzai garden C. the gazebo D. all fraudulent tax returns from 1987-93.
14. Whose cheek would you refuse to scar in your secret Yale college fraternity? A. Oldenburg's B. Dettlof's C. Janko's D. von Pfeiffer's
15. You would work for a nuclear waste dump if it provided a retirement package including A. harp lessons B. apricots C. elevator shoes D. Faye Dunaway's teeth
16. Which one of the following did not like where he lived? A. Fulbert of Chartres B. Cyril of Alexandria C. Fred of Flatbush D. Guido of Castello

17. Of the following, which one would you most unlike to have hanging from your lower lip? A. an eelpout B. Otto Von Bismark C. a linnet D. Rosa Luxemburg

18. Who weighed the most in the third grade? A. Kirsten Flagstad B. Henry James C. Louis The Sluggard C. Fred of Flatbush

19. Which one of the following was wait-listed at the evening extension division of the University of Tomsk in Siberia?

A. Nostradamus B. Samuel Gompers C. Rutherford B. Hayes D. Egelbert von Schnochnigg

Part II -- Mathematics and Science (Thirty-two nanoseconds)

Answer the following with a T for True, F for False, or M for Maybe, or N for None of the Above or V for Vegetable or Mineral, or Y for Yale, unless a multiple choice answer, which must never spell out in succession the ABC Islands or you will disappear.

1. King Rudolph of Novgorod or Prince Henry the Navigator?

2. An imperforated 1876 Romanian stamp, lilac magenta, with the balding head of King Carol, original face value of 1 Leus, and a watermark of a gold fur disco ball, is now worth how much more than all the real estate in Baldwin, Long Island?

3. You need to kill your chemistry teacher because of an "A-" at mid-term, so you would use?

A. Gammexane B. Vinylidene chloride C. a shovel D. phosgame

4. Your yearly sneaker purchases should feed for a decade?

A. 22 Mennonite Brethren B. 89 anorectics C. 773 Golden Retrievers C. 11,109 Ethiopians

5. Your parents are willing to send you to Aspen for Christmas and will allow you 1900 pounds of luggage. You must take with you ?

A. 3,400 Barbie Dolls B. 33,450 diaries of Anais Nin C. 200 pounds of SAT Review books C. your personal depilatator

6. Smart white people with doubtful prostate cancer and unnecessary colostomy bags outnumber black people in our beloved country by?

A. 1200% B. .002% C. five D. one Dan Rather

7. You need to torture a third-world terrorist. You would use?

A. aminazin B. Sanapax C. motiden-depo D. Dan Rather

8. Sucking raw tailpipe exhaust is?

A. mutagenic B. carcinogenic C. fattening D. normal

9. A third generation semihard automaton using applicator engineering and algorithms in bubble memory can make more snuggly diapers than a close-looped bang-biped robot on a deadman switch if always employing remote batch processing? Yes or no? What is the degree of disorder, either in microns or Freudian terms?

10. The first reliable condom was perfected by?

A. The Hittites B. The Medeans C. Ralph Waldo Emerson C. Alberto Flippo on a rowboat in Lake Winnepesaukee for his half-brother, Gloria Estefan.

11. If you are gagging on your tongue and attempting to swallow your nose, you might be suffering from?

A. ringworm B. tapeworm C. rabies D. Susan Sontag

12. What was the weight (in grams) of Leeuwenhoek's right hand when he discovered sperm?

13. If you are in a leaking lifeboat stranded in the doldrums with one banana, who can you ill afford to keep aboard?

A. Betty Furness B. Simone Weil C. Henry Kissinger D. Sylvana Mangano

14. Which one of the following bugs is most likely to invade Euro kitchen cabinets in Greek Revival ranch houses in Shaker Heights?

A. the bubble bug B. the ant lion C. the midge D. the bluebearded botfly E. the Robert Goulet bug

Scoring:

All Correct: Yale

Most Correct: Patrick Henry Junior College, Louisiana

Few Correct: Merrill Lynch

All Wrong: Yale

IMPORTANT!!! For scores to be properly validated and faxed to Yale, send results and \$9,000 to Fred of Flatbush c/o GENETIC CENTER, Box 333, Princeton, Albania 0012X.

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CNL: Stories
reprinted from the Compost NewsLetter
Samhain 1992:
Mice in Glass Coffins
by Danielle Willis

I met Felina because she called me in the middle of the night and told me she'd read my book *Corpse Delectable* and could tell I was a real vampire. Apparently Charlie from the horror book store had given her my phone number, and she wanted to know if I'd meet her for breakfast, an odd request to make of a vampire; but I said sure anyway, and we agreed on 11 o'clock at the Bon Ami on Jones Street, where I spent about a half hour drinking coffee and staring out the window at a puddle of vomit on the sidewalk before she finally showed up.

Her lateness was entirely justified by the obvious effort she had put into her wardrobe, which consisted of a floor length black velvet cape, a ruffled shirt with a red velvet vest, black velvet pants, black leather buccaneer boots, an enormous silver pentagram necklace and earrings made from the jawbones of rats. In addition to sporting the most opulent Goth drag I'd ever seen in my life, she was emaciated, had long black hair down past her tits and skin the color of liquid paper. I asked her how she got her skin that white and she said Porcelana Fade Creme.

We ordered pancakes and Felina told me she was being considered for the part of Madeleine in the film version of *Interview With the Vampire* and that her boyfriend was Nicholas Shreck, close personal friend of Charles Manson and author of *The Manson File*. Their apartment was only a few blocks away if I wanted to come over after breakfast -- the only thing was, Nicholas was a Satanist Nazi and didn't approve of her being bisexual, so we couldn't be too obvious in front of him. I said I hated Nazi politics but thought the uniforms were fabulous, which seemed to dispell any fears she might have had of my making some kind of social faux pas.

Felina and Nicholas lived on Hyde and Larkin in a dark flat full of cats, antique furniture,

morbid bric-a-brac, and piles of festering garbage. There were framed pictures of Charles Manson and Adolf Hitler all over the walls and in the parlor was an enormous altar draped with a swastika flag, on top of which were several wrought-iron candelabras and a statue of Satan in goat form. Felina said Nicholas was going to be interviewed on the Geraldo Rivera Satanism special and that I could be on it too if I went to the 8/8/88 celebration at the Strand Theatre and made sure to sit down front and scream "Hail Satan!" a lot. I said I thought it sounded like fun. Then she went to the kitchen to make us some tea and I plunked myself down on a brocaded sofa that smelled like cat piss and stared at a dessicated mouse in a miniature glass coffin sitting on top of a faded Zyklon B gas label on the coffee table until she returned with the tea and Nicholas, who had just woken up from a nap.

Nicholas was a tall, snotty-looking blond in a Victorian nightshirt. I was afraid he was going to launch into some tiresome diatribe, but all he did was mumble hello and glare at me through watery, pinkish eyes. Felina explained that he'd left his contact lenses in for six months and still had a bit of an infection. Nicholas asked her if that information was really necessary, at which point one of the cats jumped onto the altar and threw up.

Later that week Felina and Nicholas had a fight and Felina came to spend the night at my house. We drank several pots of coffee and tried to have sex but we were too tweaked and kept cracking up, so we got dressed up like white trash housewives and made my roommate take Polaroids of us instead. I didn't see her again until the 8/8/88 celebration.

The date August 8, 1988 had some kind of occult significance that I have since forgotten, but at the time it seemed important enough to invite Mistress Lilith, the proprietress of the pagan dungeon I was working at in Berkeley, so we piled on the ghoul makeup and took BART over to Civic Center. The 8/8/88 celebration consisted of several boring Charles Manson movies, a Survival Research Labs film of a horse skeleton hooked up to various kinds of machinery that was interesting for about five minutes but went on for twenty, a live performance by the transcendently boring industrial-dirge band NAN, and finally, a quasi-Fascist Satanic ritual involving Anton LaVey's large-breasted blonde daughter Zeena reading aloud from her daddy's book while Felina, Nicholas, and Mark Pauline stood around in Gestapo uniforms. I alternated between screaming "Hail Satan!" at the Geraldo Rivera film crew and trying to make Felina crack up. Lilith, meanwhile, was getting freaked out and paranoid because as a white witch she didn't want to be associated with Nazi Satanists. I tried to calm her down by explaining that they were just a bunch of art-damaged Re/Search magazine trust-fund trendies, which only served to convince her that I was in league with them. Lilith had done a great deal of acid over the years and had actually known Charles Manson in Haight Ashbury. At any rate, my employment at the dungeon was terminated shortly thereafter and rumors of my attendance at Black Masses began circulating through the poetry scene.

Felina went to Europe for a few months and the next time I saw her was at the Market Street Cinema. She'd broken up with Nicholas and bleached her hair out to red because

she wanted to look like a mermaid. We finally consummated our relationship onstage to the accompaniment of a really annoying Cure tape. Her cunt smelled like ammonia and we made three dollars in tips.

The last time I saw her was at Carl's Junior in North Beach. I was waiting for my friend Bambi to get off work at Finocchio's when in walked Felina with a couple of rocker chicks in black leather jackets. We drank coffee and split a Carl's Happy Cheese and I asked her if she wanted to hang out later and she said she couldn't because her and her friends were on their way to do some heroin. I never heard from her again, though according to my roommate she tried to get in touch with me once or twice while I was in New York but either forgot to leave her phone number or didn't have one and I forget who it was but somebody told me she was pregnant and living with a rich guy who was into an intense retro-50s trip. I have the worst luck with girlfriends.

Danielle

Danielle Willis

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CNL: Stories

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Beltaine 1993:

I Wanted to Kill My Boss but His Brother Beat Me To It or, The Wheel of Karma

by Danielle Willis

The following is a poem I wrote about the late Artie Mitchell a few weeks after I beat him up in the summer of 1988:

He Thinks the World Owes Him a Blowjob

Artie follows me around the dressing room at a safe distance of at least five feet because he's afraid I'm going to lay into him with my shoe again and he wants to know if I'd be willing to piss on his face because if he doesn't get his face pissed on at least twice a day he gets terrible acne. I push past him to cue my tape and he tells his drinking buddy I'm the one who kicked his ass last week, you know, two people have to have a lot of passion for each other to fight like that and he was way out of line and totally deserved it but he's glad we were able to settle our differences in a mature and professional manner only he'd really appreciate it if I didn't send him to the hospital the next time he just needed a hug.

R.I.P.

Ding dong the witch is dead

I didn't include that poem in *Dogs in Lingerie* because I was afraid it would get me fired from the O'Farrell, but, as it turned out, I got fired anyway, just a few days before the book came off the press. I'm pretty sure the reason for this was the fact that I showed up for work one night in a rather manic state of mind decked out in a pair of silver lame bellbottoms and pink glitter platform shoes wielding a poster of Shaun Cassidy and

singing "Disco Inferno" at the top of my lungs. The theme of me and Brandy's Ultraroom was Swinging '70s and I guess Jim Mitchell found my level of enthusiasm alarming because he stopped me in the hallway and told me I was nothing but a fucking novelty act, a curious remark coming from the proprietor of a club where grown women are encouraged to dress up in nurse uniforms and fist fuck each other in front of busloads of adrenaline-crazed Japanese tourists. In any case, I was taken off the schedule a few months later along with six or seven other dancers deemed "due for 90-day rotation."

Nobody really gets fired from Mitchell Brothers, they just get "rotated" off the schedule until such time as they kiss enough ass to get reinstated. It happens to everyone eventually but I thought I was an exception because Artie Mitchell had attacked me two years earlier and I'd beaten the shit out of him with a steel-heeled pump, after which we'd struck up a wierd kind of friendship where we'd get stoned and sit around talking about manatees. Jim hated my guts but tolerated my presence because I was Artie's buddy and he wasn't quite sure what the legal repercussions of firing me might be.

(Actually, there would have been none: I asked a lawyer about the possibility of a lawsuit and he told me I couldn't get Artie on assault because I'd won the fight -- the only thing I could prosecute him for was sexual harassment, which, given the nature of my employment, would have been laughed out of court.)

The other dancers thought I was a kind of superhero and I agreed with them wholeheartedly. I was One Mean Bitch, a sexual subversive in a coked -out yuppie Jizz-neyland where the customer was always right and third rate rock bands like Skid Row were allowed to roam at will through the dressing room -- one night in the Kopenhagen ("the lounge with the intimate, European atmosphere") Vince Neil from Motley Crue told me I had a "rad clitoris". I was the girl nobody dared fuck with, who'd fought the system and won, who could wear neon green fright wigs and dance to "I Love the Dead" by Alice Cooper if I goddamned felt like it. Let all those simpering bleached blonde tit job bitches go hide in the bathroom when Art was on one of his rampages -- I was invincible, living proof that all women had to do to end their oppression was learn how to kick ass. Anyway, the statute of limitations on assault runs out after two years and I found myself on the "rotation" list.

I stormed into Art and Jim's office with all my press clippings and porn videos and raved that I thought we'd had "an understanding" and that besides, as an artist and semi-celebrity, I "reflected well" on their establishment -- after all, I was on the cover of Kinky Contacts, Hustler had given my video "Dr. Drag" a full erect, and I had a write-up in Interview magazine along with a lovely photo of me at a Hollywood poetry reading flanked by Moon Unit Zappa and Ed Begley Jr. Jim looked really bored and said he wasn't impressed and Art just sat there toking away and giggling like a brain-damaged three year old. I threatened to sue them, trash them in the press, et cetera, ad nauseam, all to no avail. I was off the schedule as of the first, period.

Getting fired from Mitchell Brothers is like being exiled from Barbie's Dream Orgy. I was devastated, enraged, and determined to wreak havok during my final week. Among my